A CentaUr's Life

story & art

KEI MURAYAMA

4

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Vol. 4

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SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

A Centaur's Life

story and art by **KEI MURAYAMA**

VOLUME 4

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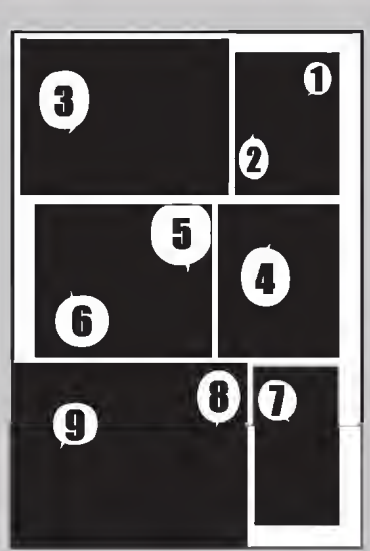
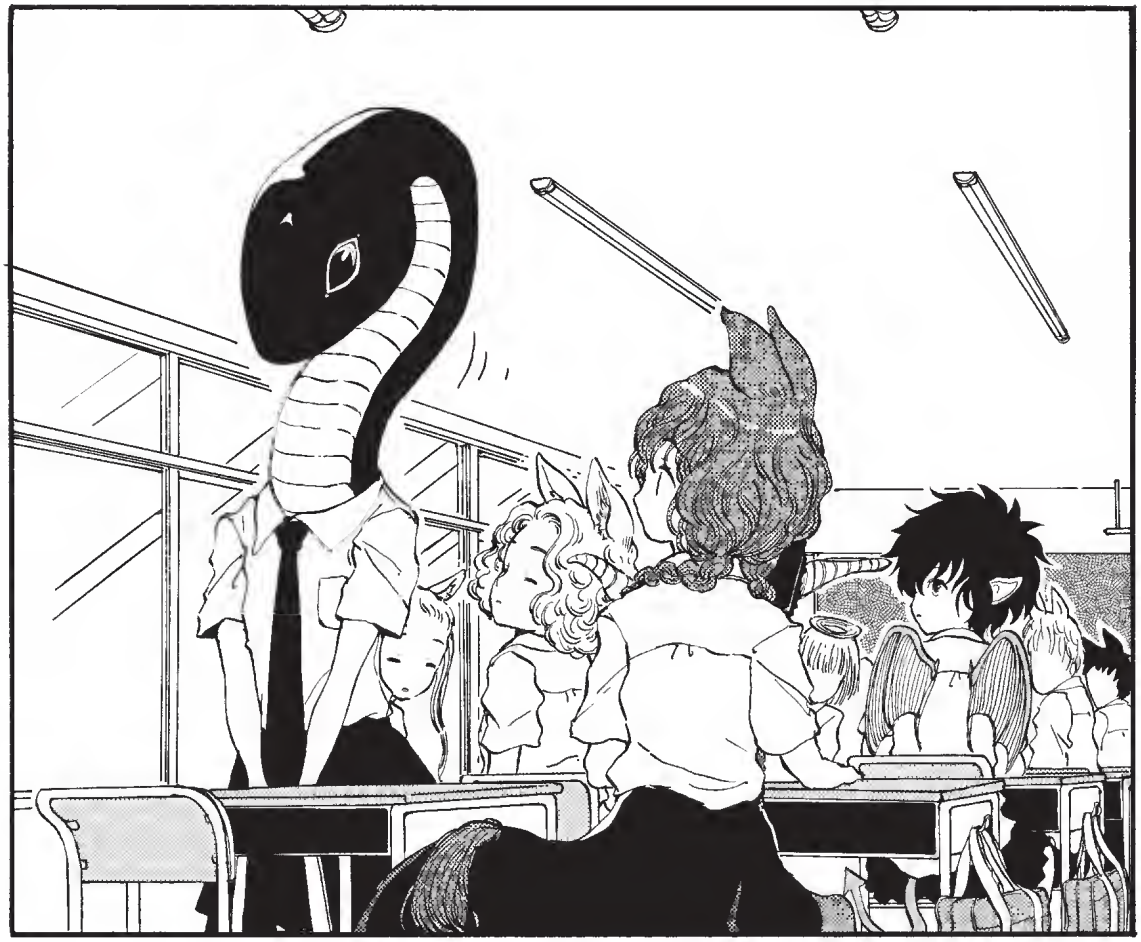
READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!

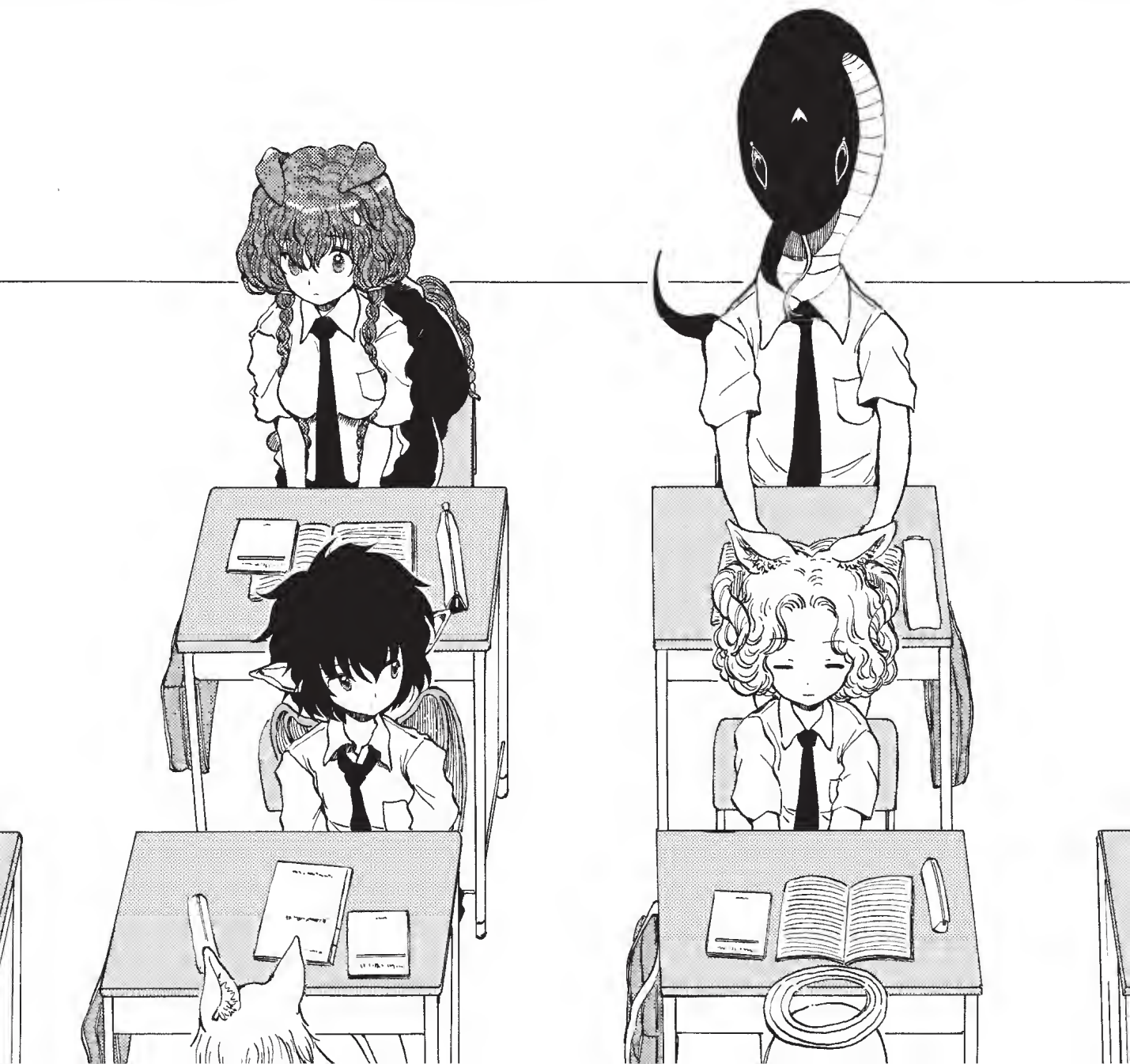




Y...YES, NICE TO MEET YOU, TOO.

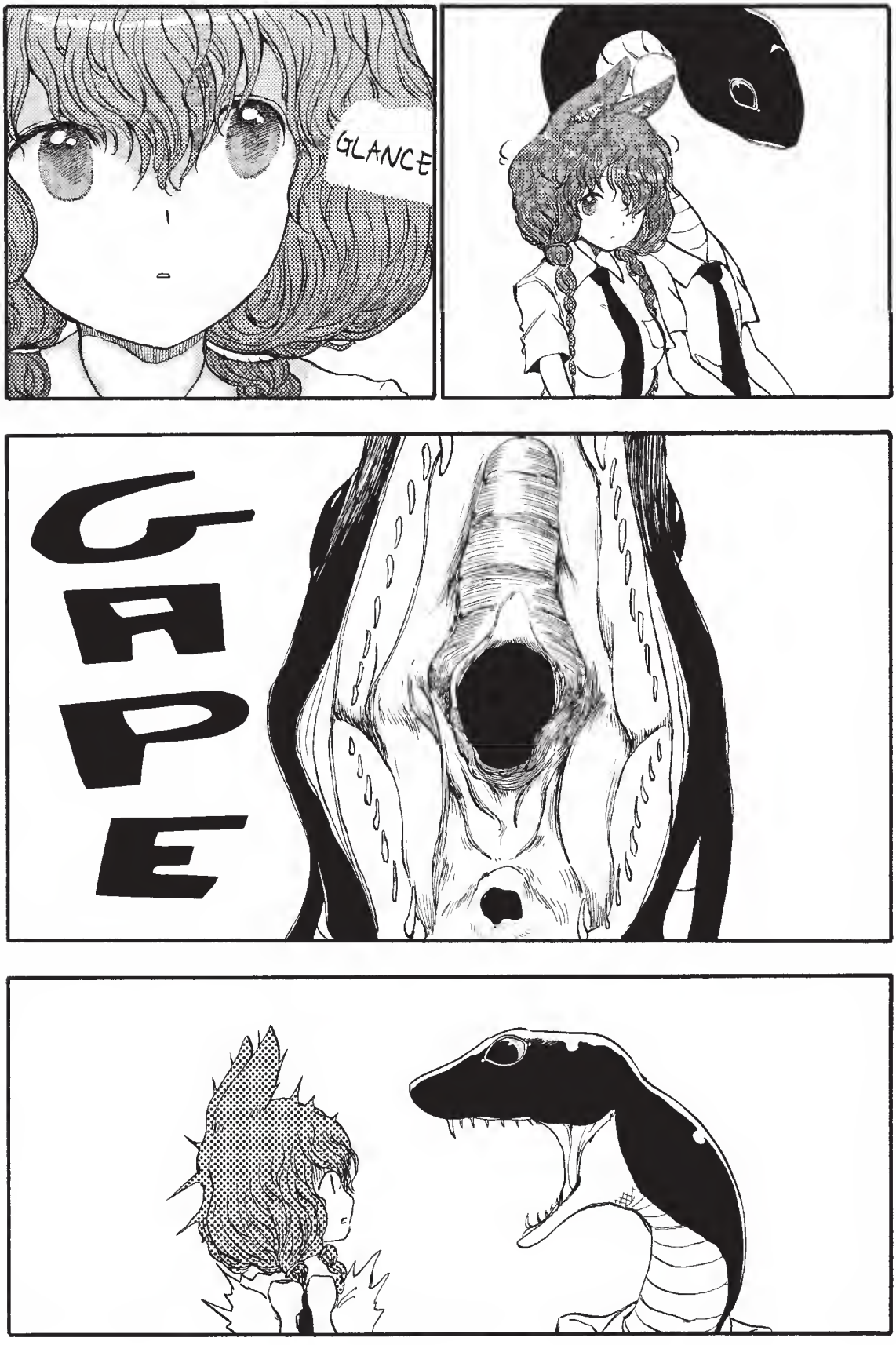
NICE TO MEET YOU.

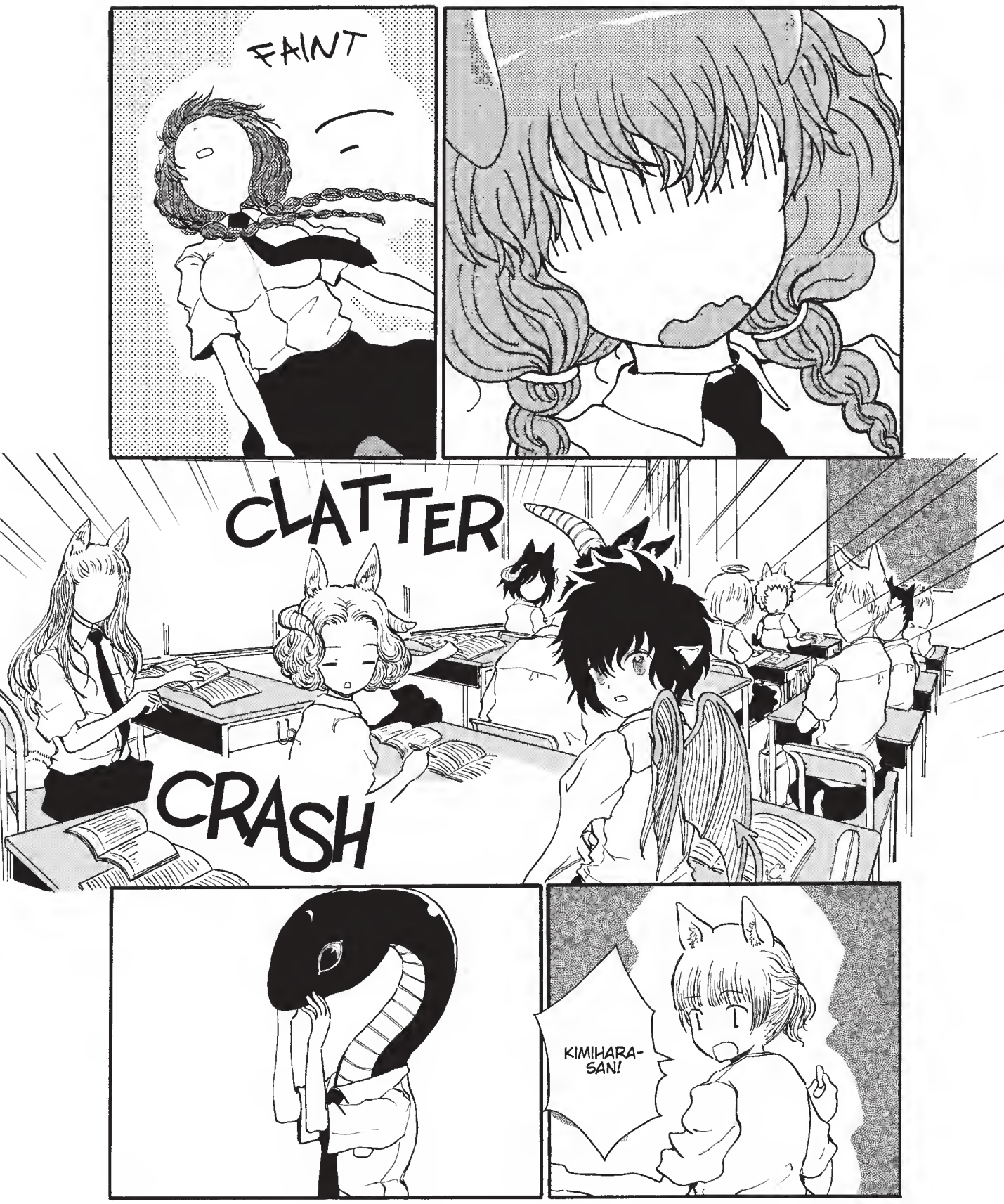
CHAPTER 15



STAND!
OKAY! LET'S GET STARTED.
BUMP
BOW!
GAH!!
BE SEATED!
THAT WAS RATHER UNSETTLING.
OH, NO! IT'S FINE.
OH, EXCUSE ME.

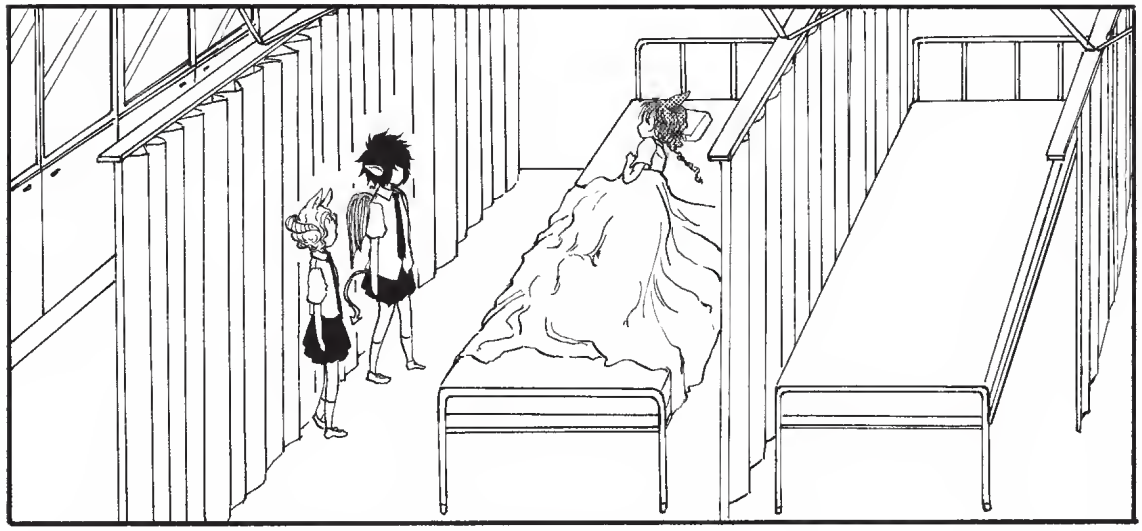
I WONDER IF SHE UNDER-STANDS.
wish to drink on, yet the pi-pa signals
CLASSICAL LITERATURE... AND A CHINESE CLASSIC, NO LESS.
GLANCE

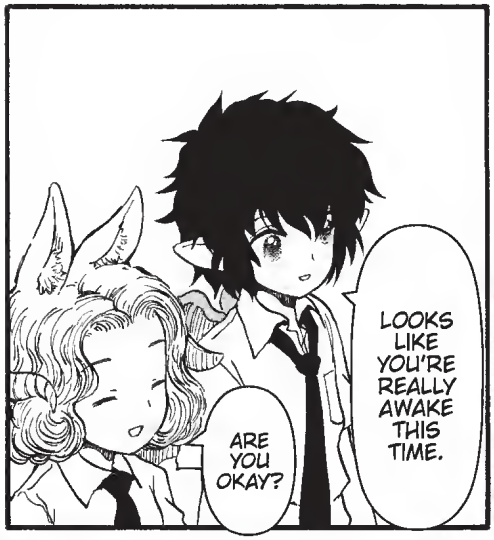

GLANCE
GAPE


FAINT
CLATTER
CRASH
KIMIHARA-SAN!

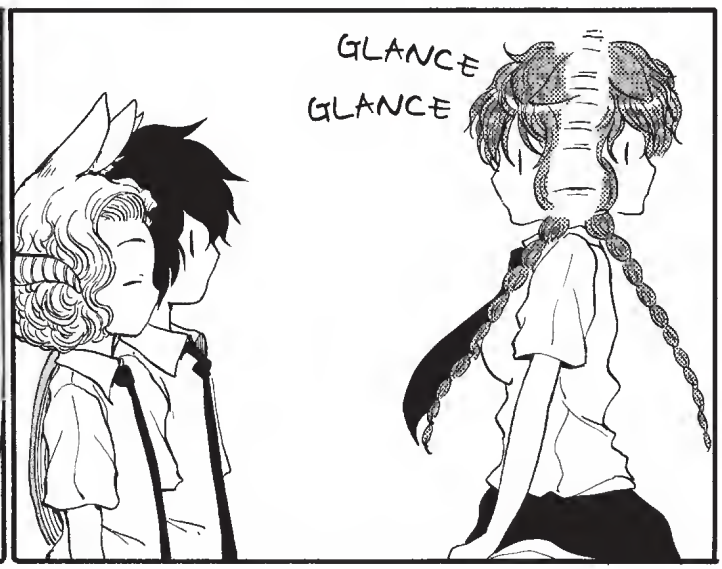
WHAT WAS THAT?!
WHAT HAP-PENED ?!
DON'T MOVE HER HEAD!
HIME!
HEY, SHE WOKE UP!

Mmgh!
FLOP
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
SLIDE
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
HIME GOT... STAR-TLED.
So, it's because of her...




ARE YOU OKAY?
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE REALLY AWAKE THIS TIME.

DON'T WORRY... SHE'S NOT HERE.


GLANCE
GLANCE

I KNOW SHE SEEMS A LITTLE SCARY.
Whew!
DON'T SOUND SO RELIEVED.
BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT COULD BE TAKEN AS AN ACT OF PREJUDICE.
THAT'S TRUE.
BUT IF YOU KEEP FAINTING LIKE THAT, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO COME TO SCHOOL.
WHAT AM I GONNA DO?!
.....

HIME'S ONLY SCARED OF SNAKEFOLK 'CAUSE OF THAT MOVIE, RIGHT?
THIS IS A TOUGH SITUATION.
HIME-CHAN CAN OVERCOME HER TRAUMA BY SEEING THE MOVIE AGAIN.
THAT'S IT!
Weren't you the one that brought it up?
WAIT, HEAR ME OUT.
YEAH. THAT'LL JUST FREAK HER OUT EVEN MORE.
UM... HOW ABOUT NO?

BUT IT WAS A REALLY LOW-BUDGET B MOVIE.
And a rather silly one, at that.
Eek!
I'M SURE IT WAS REALLY SCARY FOR LITTLE HIME-CHAN...
DO YOU HAVE A BETTER IDEA?
I dunno...
That would cure her fear.
I'M SURE IF SHE SAW IT NOW, SHE'D SEE HOW RIDICU-LOUS IT IS.
DO I LOOK LIKE A PROFESSIONAL WRESTLER?
WAIT... DID YOU TWO... CARRY ME HERE?

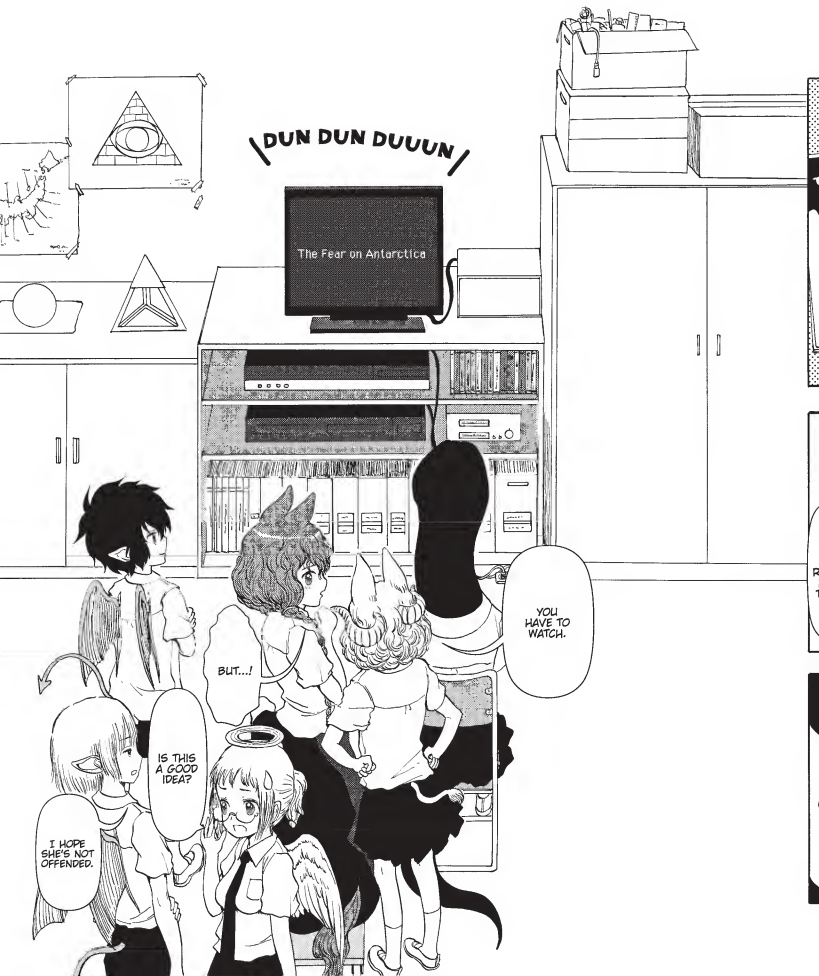
CAN WE COME IN?
OH! OF COURSE.
SHIGETOKI-SAN WAS THE ONE WHO CARRIED YOU HERE.
Komura-san and Nekomi-san helped.
TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

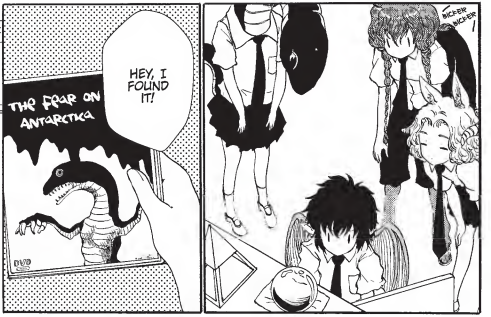
I'M SORRY IF I SCARED YOU.
N-NO, I, UM...
Well, you did, but...
UM...
OH, A SMILE? CAN I SEE?
SURE.
I WAS TRYING TO SMILE, BUT APPARENTLY IT DIDN'T GO VERY WELL.
That's a little over-whelming.
Yeah...

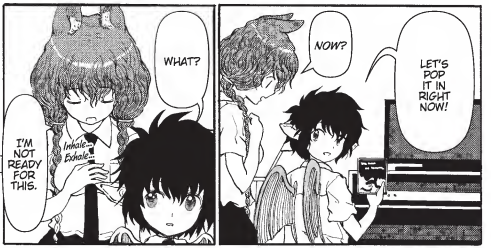
DON'T SAY THAT.
IT SEEMS THAT MY PRESENCE HERE WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT.
I SEE... I DIDN'T KNOW SUCH MOVIES EXISTED.
MAY I WATCH IT, AS WELL?
Hime is only scared because of a movie...!
LIKE I SAID.
I heard it was pretty terrible.
YOUNG LADY, ARE YOU SURE?
We could make the excuse that it's American-made.
SURE, WHY NOT?

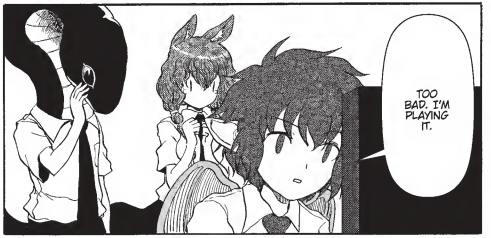
I'M NOT ALLOWED IN THE CLASS-ROOMS, BUT I'LL BE WAITING OUT HERE.
AFTER SCHOOL.
It's an Antarctic Snake person!
Oh, wow! It is!
HEYO.
SLIDE
WE DON'T SEE YOU IN THE CLUB ROOM VERY OFTEN.
Shorty-sempai.
Who are you calling short?!
I CAME TO CLEAN THE AQUARIUM, DIDN'T I?

AH... HELLO.
SLIDE
HELLO. SORRY FOR INTRUDING.
Whoa!
HELLO. NICE TO MEET YOU.
SAVE THE TALK FOR LATER.
WOW, AMAZING! A SNAKE-FOLK!
VICE-PRESIDENT, YOU HAVE A BUNCH OF MOVIES HERE, RIGHT?
THEY'RE ALL HORROR MOVIES, THOUGH.
WELL, WE'RE THE OCCULT CLUB, SO THAT'S A GIVEN.
THIS IS THE SCIENCE CLUB! YOU GUYS ARE JUST FREE-LOADERS!
NO WAY! THERE ARE MORE PEOPLE HERE FOR THE OCCULT CLUB THAN THE SCIENCE CLUB.


DUN DUN DUUUN
The Fear on Antarctica
I HOPE SHE'S NOT OFFENDED.
IS THIS A GOOD IDEA?
BUT...!
YOU HAVE TO WATCH.


THE FEAR ON ANTARCTICA
HEY, I FOUND IT!
RICKER RICKER


I'M NOT READY FOR THIS.
Inhale... Exhale...
WHAT?
NOW?
LET'S POP IT IN RIGHT NOW!


TOO BAD. I'M PLAYING IT.

Eep!
Eeyaaah!
DUM
DUM
DUM
DUUUM
Wait... you're not Alyssa!
Eyes on the screen!
Alyssa! What's wrong?!
Check everyone's blood!
Who did it disguise itself as this time?!

EEK!
GYARGH!
I-I'M SOR-RY!
Huh?
SO, HOW WAS IT?
IT WAS QUITE SCARY...
IT WAS STILL SCARY!
THE EN
DA DA DA DUUUM

AMAZING. I DIDN'T KNOW THAT HUMANS COULD IMAGINE SUCH A TERRIFYING CREATURE.
Gasp
IT CAN'T BE!
YOU DON'T THINK THIS IS REAL, DO YOU?!
WELL... WE DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT YOUR RACE.
YOU... YOU DON'T EAT PEOPLE?

OPEN
Nngah!
WE DON'T HAVE POISONOUS FANGS.
OF COURSE NOT! DON'T EVEN JOKE ABOUT THAT!
Please don't compare me to a movie monster!
OUR JAWS ARE VERY WEAK COMPARED TO CREATURES WHO CHEW.
Swallows Whole →
Chews →
EVEN IF WE DID BITE SOMEONE, IT WOULD BE LIKE BEING BITTEN BY A KITTEN.
WE CAN'T SQUEEZE SOMEONE TO DEATH LIKE A CONSTRICTOR.
AND SINCE WE CAN'T DISLOCATE OUR JAWS, WE CAN'T SWALLOW ANYONE WHOLE.
NOT TO MENTION THAT WE WOULD NEVER EAT AN INTELLIGENT BEING!

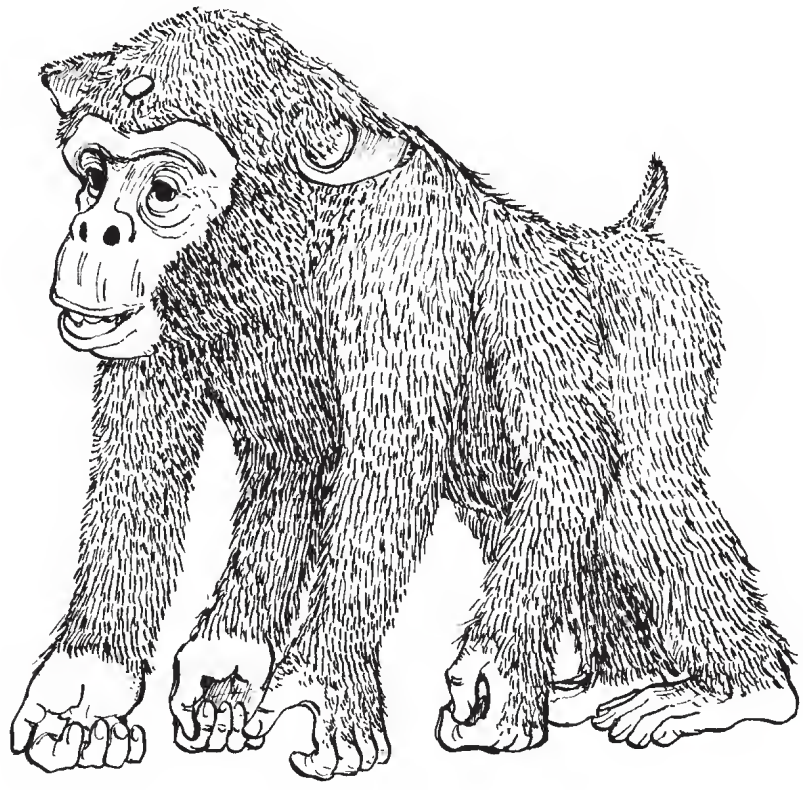
ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE US TO COURT?
OF COURSE NOT.
I HAD NO IDEA WE WERE THOUGHT OF AS SUCH MONSTERS.
WELL, THAT'S AN ESPECIALLY SKEWED VIEWPOINT, BUT...
THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING SO KIND TO ME.
OH, NO. OF COURSE.
THE FEAR ON ANTARCTICA
DISPELLING MISUNDERSTANDINGS LIKE THESE IS THE REASON I'M HERE.
DVD
FAINT
AH--!
SMILE
...SO KIND TO ME.
AND THANK YOU, FOR BEING...

A CentaUr's Life

EXPLORING HUMAN ANCESTRY: FAMILY HOMINIDAE

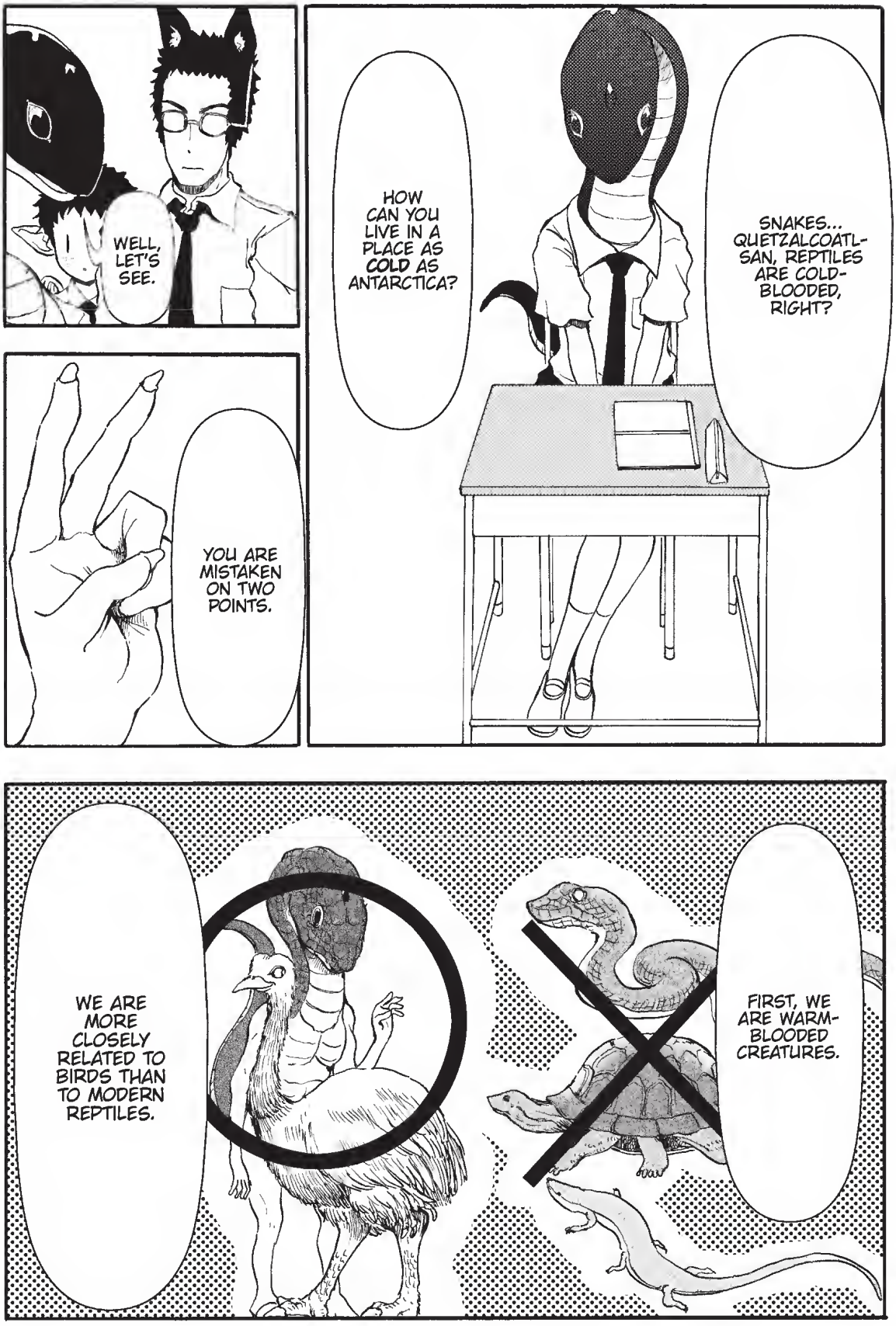
THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF FAMILY HOMINIDAE ARE CHIMPANZEES, GORILLAS, ORANGUTANS, AND HUMANS. ALTHOUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OTHER GREAT APES VASTLY DIFFERS FROM THAT OF HUMANS, IT CAN SOMETIMES BE DIFFICULT TO TELL THEM APART FROM OUR OWN APE-LIKE ANCESTORS. THE PRIMARY DIFFERENCE IS THAT THE OTHER HOMINIDS CONTINUED KNUCKLE-WALKING WHILE HUMANS EVOLVED TO STAND UPRIGHT. OUR FELLOW GREAT APES HAVE BEEN PROVEN TO USE TOOLS AND HAVE EVEN LEARNED AND USED LANGUAGE TO COMMUNICATE WITH HUMANS.

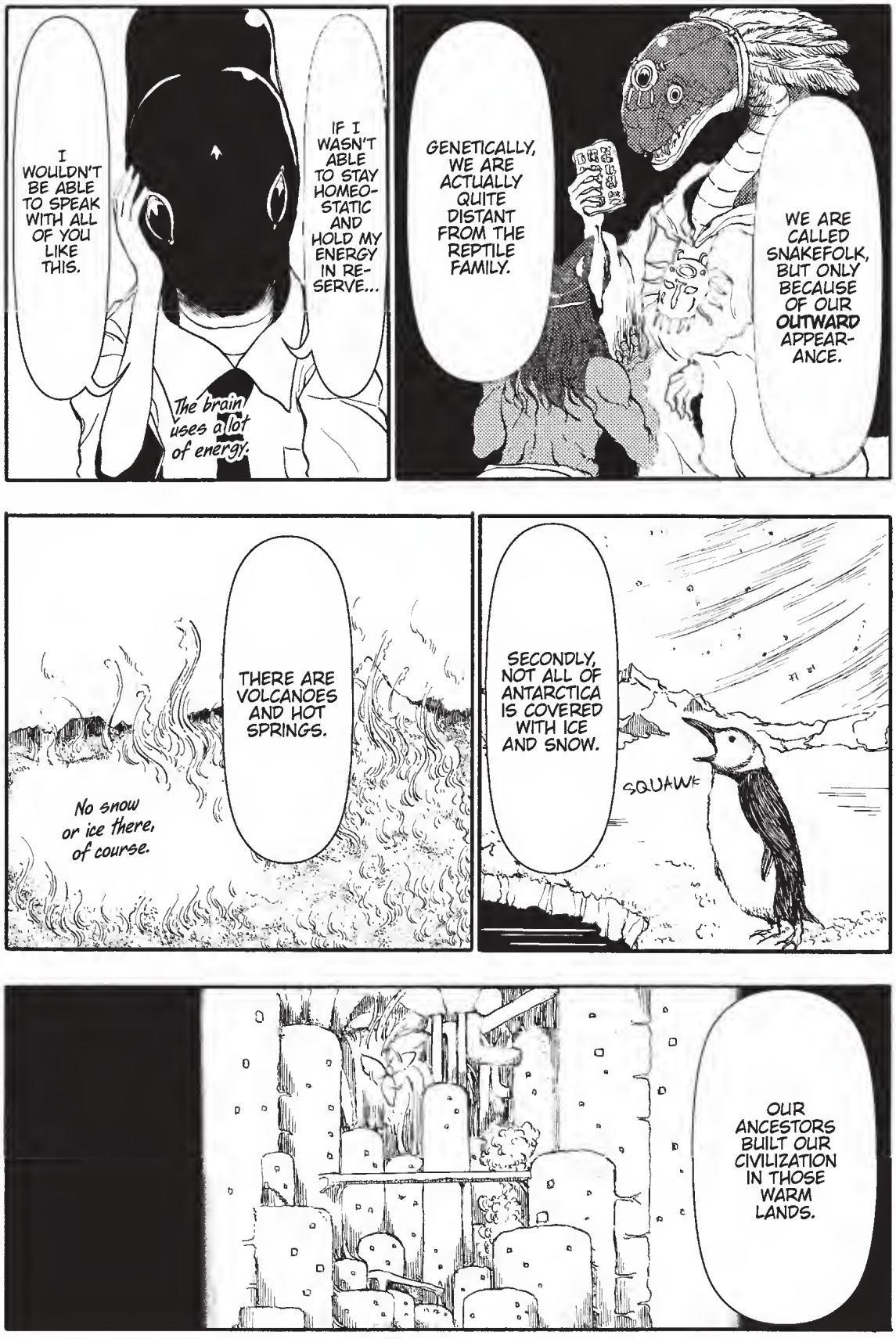
THE OTHER GREAT APES, LIKE OTHER MAMMALS ASIDE FROM THE HUMAN SPECIES, HAVE ONLY A SINGLE BODY MORPHOLOGY. AMONG VERTEBRATES, ONLY HUMANS AND PEOPLE OF THE ANTARCTIC (SNAKEFOLK) HAVE HUGE MORPHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES WITHIN A SINGLE SPECIES. BOTH SPECIES ARE INTELLIGENT WITH ADVANCED LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE, A FACTOR THAT IS CONSIDERED TO HAVE GREAT EVOLUTIONARY IMPORTANCE.

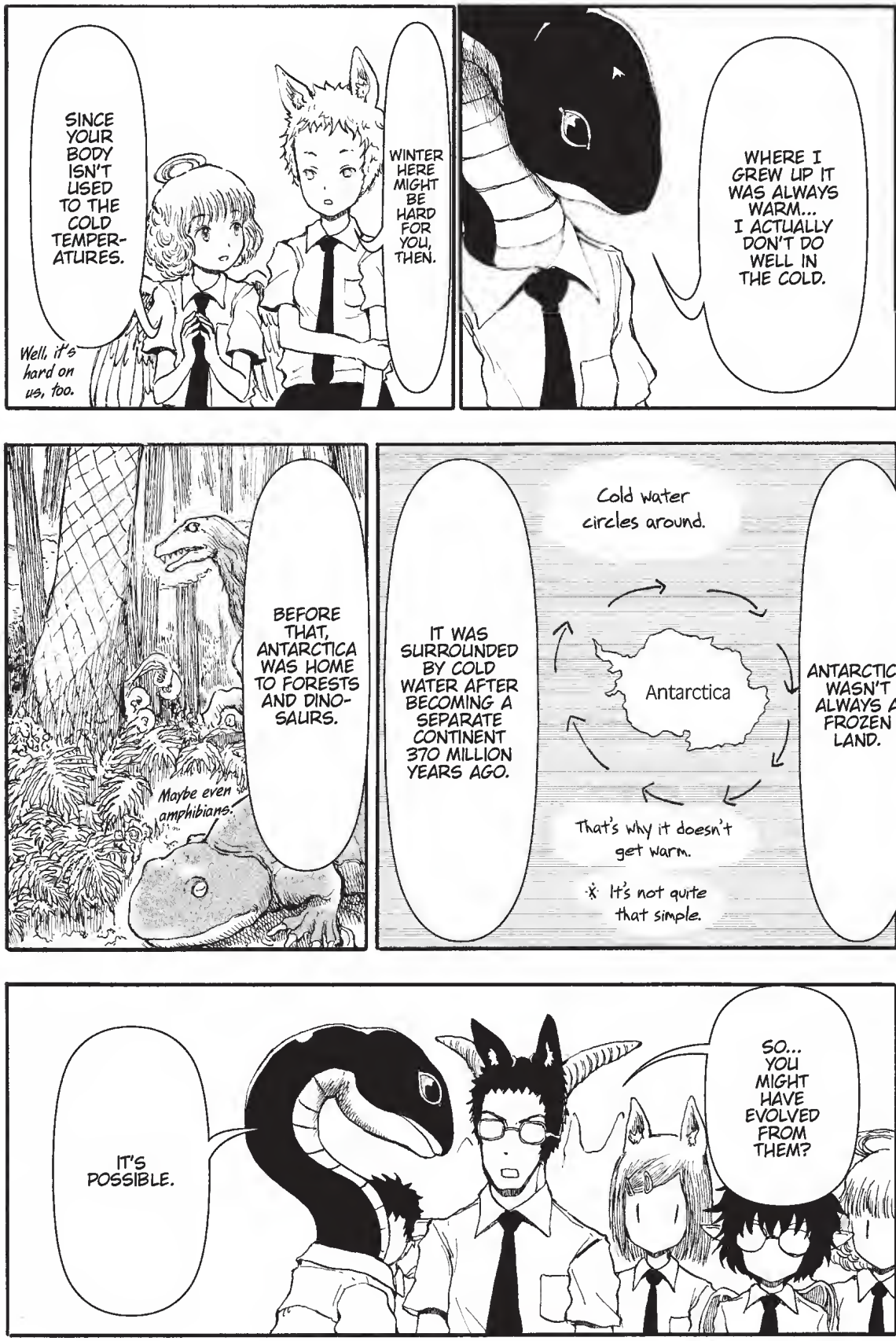


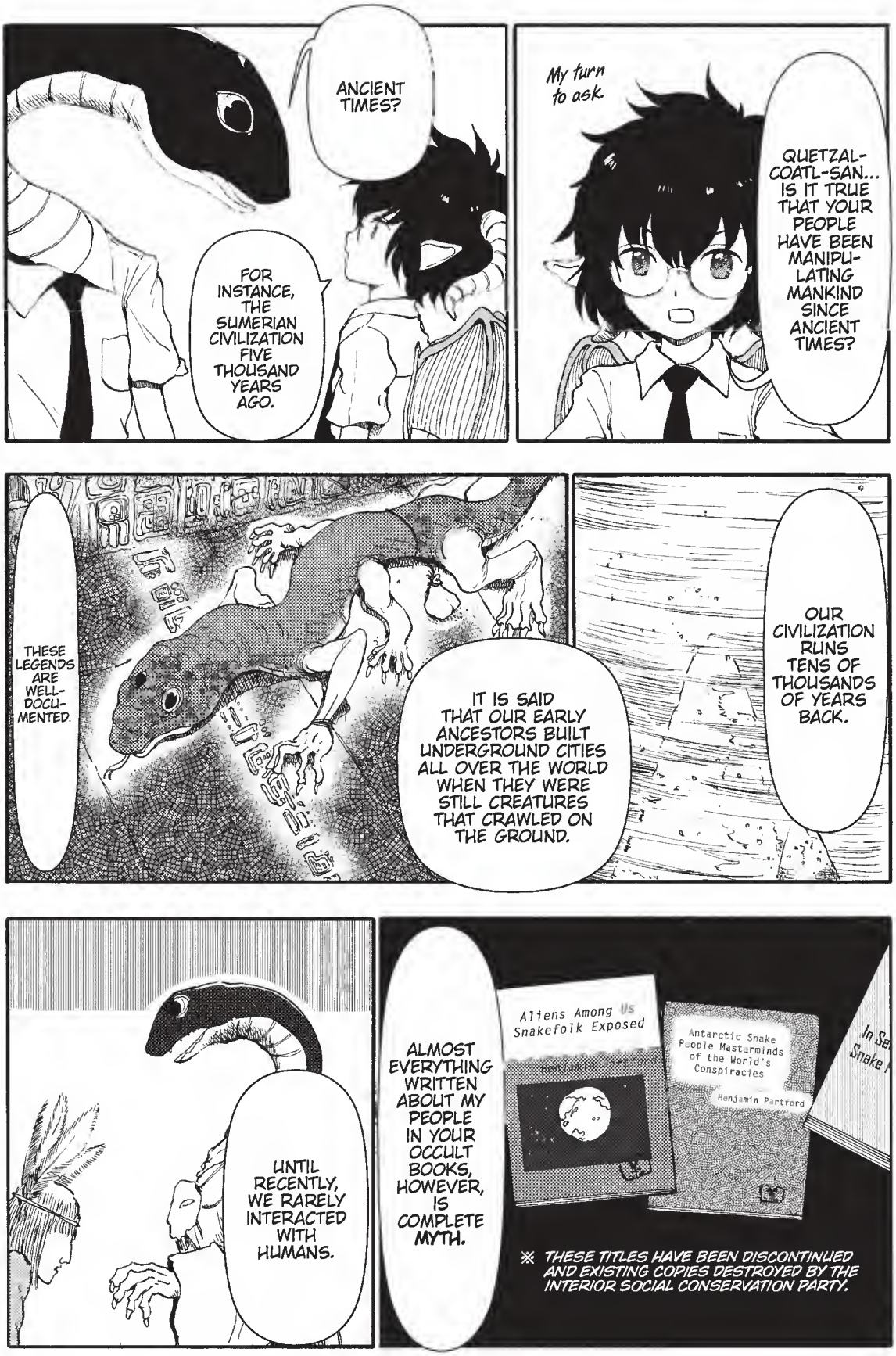
CHAPTER 16

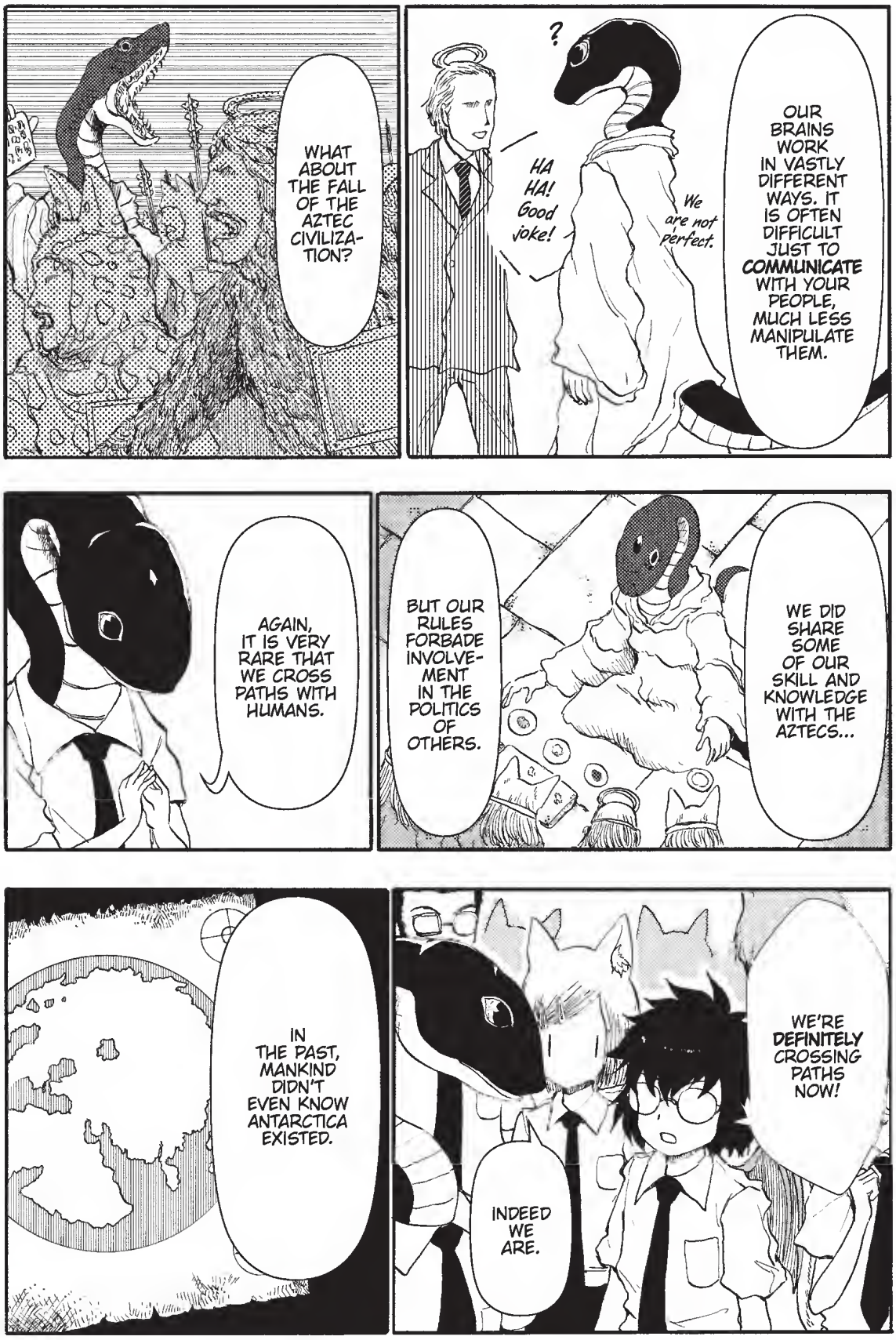
MAY I ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS, PLEASE?!
OKAY.
Y-YES?
CHATTER
Ooh, pick me!
I have one too!
I wanna ask!
Me too!
OKAY, I'LL GO FIRST.
Seems like we can communicate well enough.
She always has to be in charge.
OKAY, PEOPLE. ONE AT A TIME.


WELL, LET'S SEE.
SNAKES... QUETZALCOATL-SAN, REPTILES ARE COLD-BLOODED, RIGHT?
HOW CAN YOU LIVE IN A PLACE AS COLD AS ANTARCTICA?
YOU ARE MISTAKEN ON TWO POINTS.
FIRST, WE ARE WARM-BLOODED CREATURES.
WE ARE MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO BIRDS THAN TO MODERN REPTILES.


I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SPEAK WITH ALL OF YOU LIKE THIS.
IF I WASN'T ABLE TO STAY HOMEO-STATIC AND HOLD MY ENERGY IN RE-SERVE...
The brain uses a lot of energy.
GENETICALLY, WE ARE ACTUALLY QUITE DISTANT FROM THE REPTILE FAMILY.
WE ARE CALLED SNAKEFOLK, BUT ONLY BECAUSE OF OUR OUTWARD APPEAR-ANCE.
THERE ARE VOLCANOES AND HOT SPRINGS.
No snow or ice there, of course.
SECONDLY, NOT ALL OF ANTARCTICA IS COVERED WITH ICE AND SNOW.
SQUAWK
OUR ANCESTORS BUILT OUR CIVILIZATION IN THOSE WARM LANDS.

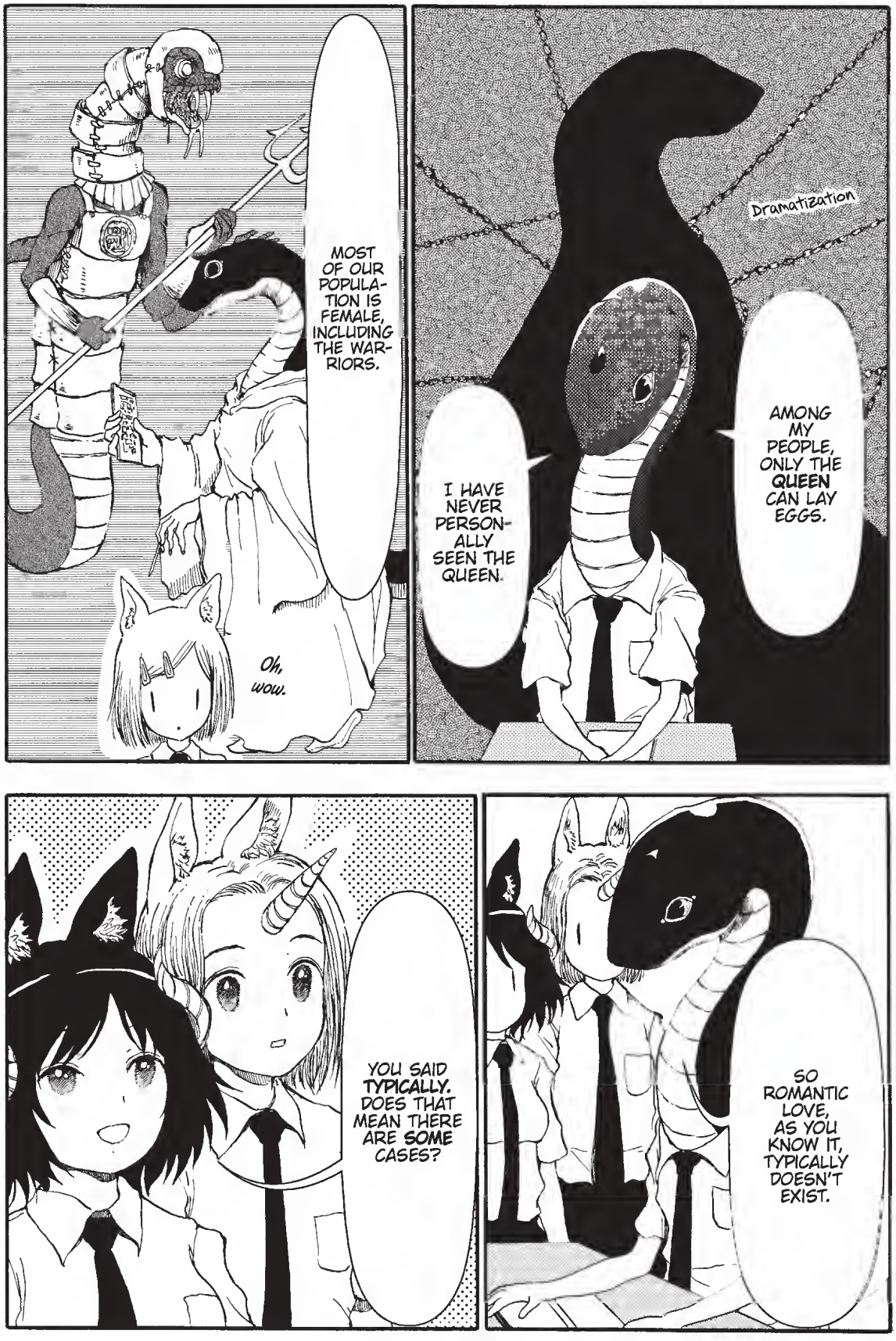

SINCE YOUR BODY ISN'T USED TO THE COLD TEMPER-ATURES.
Well, it's hard on us, too.
WINTER HERE MIGHT BE HARD FOR YOU, THEN.
WHERE I GREW UP IT WAS ALWAYS WARM... I ACTUALLY DON'T DO WELL IN THE COLD.
BEFORE THAT, ANTARCTICA WAS HOME TO FORESTS AND DINO-SAURS.
Maybe even amphibians.
IT WAS SURROUNDED BY COLD WATER AFTER BECOMING A SEPARATE CONTINENT 370 MILLION YEARS AGO.
Cold water circles around.
Antarctica
That's why it doesn't get warm.
※ It's not quite that simple.
ANTARCTICA WASN'T ALWAYS A FROZEN LAND.
IT'S POSSIBLE.
SO... YOU MIGHT HAVE EVOLVED FROM THEM?

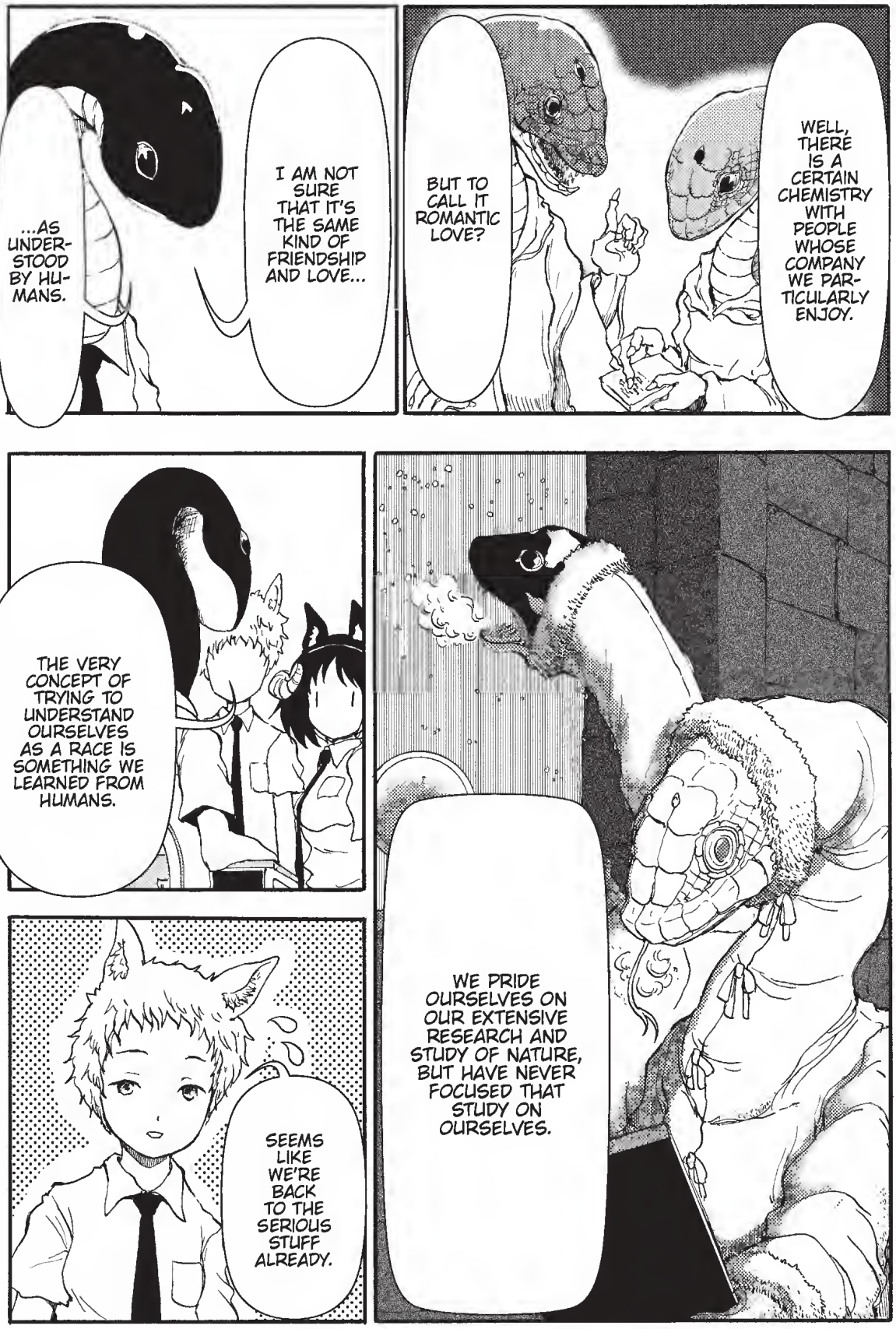

ANCIENT TIMES?
FOR INSTANCE, THE SUMERIAN CIVILIZATION FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO.
My turn to ask.
QUETZAL-COATL-SAN... IS IT TRUE THAT YOUR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MANIPU-LATING MANKIND SINCE ANCIENT TIMES?
THESE LEGENDS ARE WELL-DOCU-MENTED.
IT IS SAID THAT OUR EARLY ANCESTORS BUILT UNDERGROUND CITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD WHEN THEY WERE STILL CREATURES THAT CRAWLED ON THE GROUND.
OUR CIVILIZATION RUNS TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS BACK.
UNTIL RECENTLY, WE RARELY INTERACTED WITH HUMANS.
ALMOST EVERYTHING WRITTEN ABOUT MY PEOPLE IN YOUR OCCULT BOOKS, HOWEVER, IS COMPLETE MYTH.
Aliens Among Us
Snakefolk Exposed
Antarctic Snake People Masterminds of the World's Conspiracies
Benjamin Partford
※ THESE TITLES HAVE BEEN DISCONTINUED AND EXISTING COPIES DESTROYED BY THE INTERIOR SOCIAL CONSERVATION PARTY.


WHAT ABOUT THE FALL OF THE AZTEC CIVILIZATION?
?
HA HA! Good joke!
We are not perfect.
OUR BRAINS WORK IN VASTLY DIFFERENT WAYS. IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT JUST TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PEOPLE, MUCH LESS MANIPULATE THEM.
AGAIN, IT IS VERY RARE THAT WE CROSS PATHS WITH HUMANS.
BUT OUR RULES FORBADE INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICS OF OTHERS.
WE DID SHARE SOME OF OUR SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE WITH THE AZTECS...
IN THE PAST, MANKIND DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ANTARCTICA EXISTED.
INDEED WE ARE.
WE'RE DEFINITELY CROSSING PATHS NOW!

BUT WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS SCHOOL?
VURRR
MODERN TECHNOLOGY HAS CHANGED ALL OF THAT.
SQUAWK
IT IS AN IDEAL SETTING FOR LEARNING ABOUT THE THOUGHT PROCESSES OF AVERAGE HUMANS.
BUT THE POPULATION IS OTHERWISE FAIRLY TYPICAL. A RESIDENTIAL AREA IN AN ACADEMIC CITY GOVERNMENT.
THE COMMUNITY'S EDUCATION AND VOCABULARY IS SUFFICIENT TO FACILITATE COMMUNI-CATION...
And pretty hot in the summer!
It gets pretty cold in the winter...
THE CLIMATE IS ALSO FAIRLY MILD.
IN OTHER WORDS, WE'RE UPPER MIDDLE CLASS.

OKAY, TIME FOR A REALLY IMPORTANT QUESTION.
DO YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND, QUETZAL-COATL-SAN?
I SEE~!
Just like me!
I DO NOT.
WELL... IT'S COMPLICATED.
SO, WHAT'S YOUR TYPE?


MOST OF OUR POPULATION IS FEMALE, INCLUDING THE WARRIORS.
Oh, wow.
Dramatization
AMONG MY PEOPLE, ONLY THE QUEEN CAN LAY EGGS.
I HAVE NEVER PERSONALLY SEEN THE QUEEN.
YOU SAID TYPICALLY. DOES THAT MEAN THERE ARE SOME CASES?
SO ROMANTIC LOVE, AS YOU KNOW IT, TYPICALLY DOESN'T EXIST.


I AM NOT SURE THAT IT'S THE SAME KIND OF FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE...
...AS UNDERSTOOD BY HUMANS.
WELL, THERE IS A CERTAIN CHEMISTRY WITH PEOPLE WHOSE COMPANY WE PARTICULARLY ENJOY.
BUT TO CALL IT ROMANTIC LOVE?
THE VERY CONCEPT OF TRYING TO UNDERSTAND OURSELVES AS A RACE IS SOMETHING WE LEARNED FROM HUMANS.
WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON OUR EXTENSIVE RESEARCH AND STUDY OF NATURE, BUT HAVE NEVER FOCUSED THAT STUDY ON OURSELVES.
SEEMS LIKE WE'RE BACK TO THE SERIOUS STUFF ALREADY.

OKAY, THAT'S ENOUGH FOR NOW.
CLAP CLAP
Me next! Pick me!
BUT THERE'S STILL SO MUCH WE DON'T KNOW!
ALREADY? I WANTED TO ASK WHAT SHE EATS!
QUESTION TIME IS OVER.
YOU'LL FIND OUT DURING LUNCH.
YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT.
FOR NOW, LET'S GET BACK TO OUR SEATS.

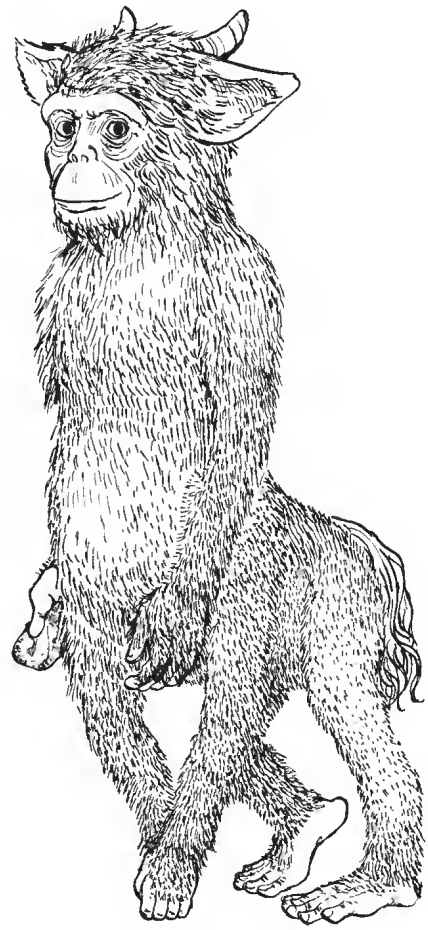
A CentaUr's Life

EXPLORING HUMAN ANCESTRY: GENUS AUSTRALOPITHECUS

AN EXTINCT GENUS OF HOMINID THAT LIVED IN AFRICA FROM ABOUT 3.9 MILLION TO 1.7 MILLION YEARS AGO. AUSTRALOPITHECINES ARE WIDELY CONSIDERED TO BE ANCESTORS OF MODERN HUMANS, PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN OUR EVOLUTION. THEY WERE ONCE THE OLDEST KNOWN HOMININ, BUT THE DISCOVERIES OF ARDIPITHECUS KADABBA AND ARDIPITHECUS RAMIDUS HAVE THROWN THAT STATUS INTO CONTENTION.

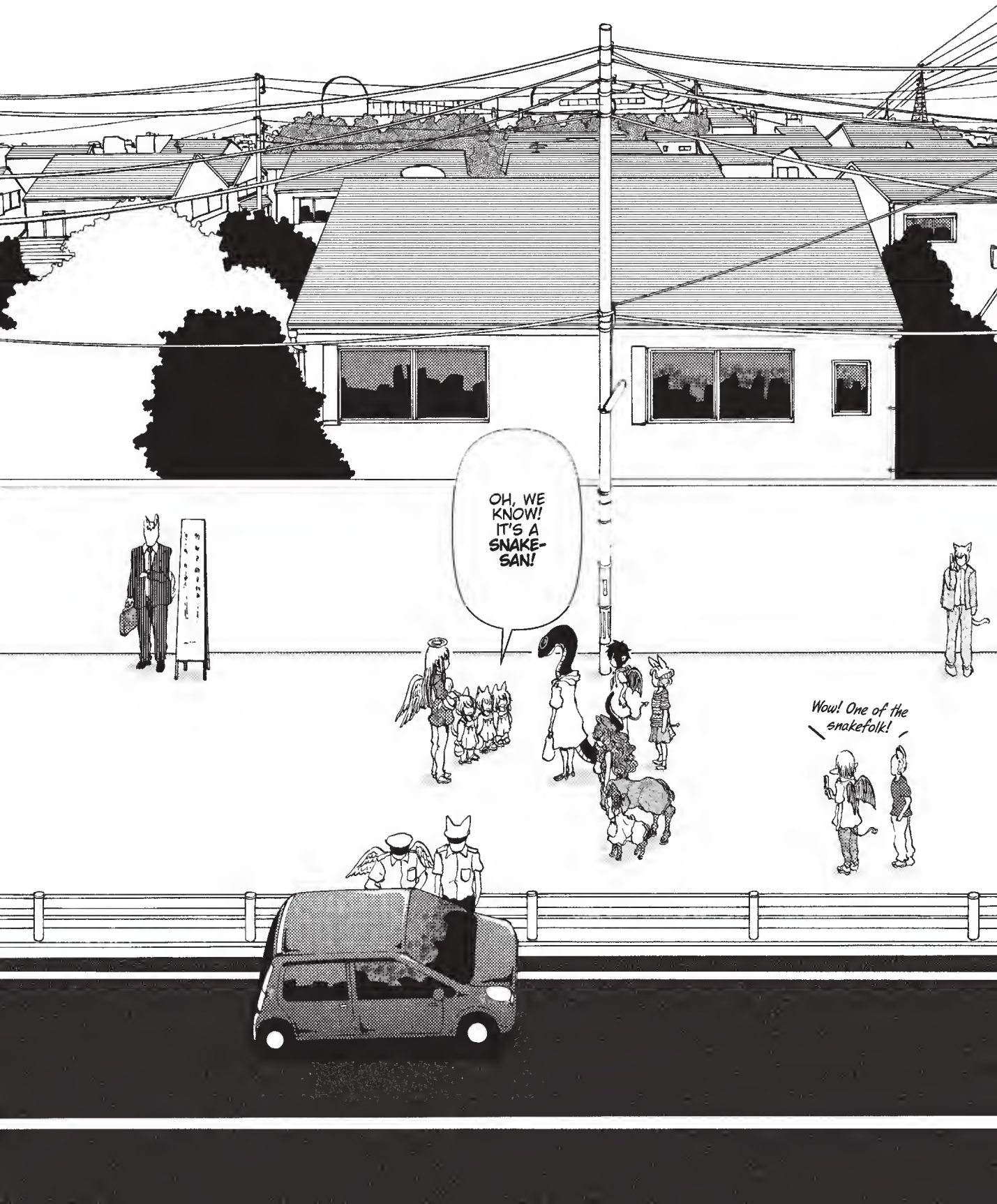
AVERAGE MALE SPECIMENS OF AUSTRALOPITHECINE SUBSPECIES STOOD ROUGHLY 4'3" TALL. RESEARCHERS SUGGEST THAT THEY MAY HAVE RESEMBLED UPRIGHT VERSIONS OF MODERN BONOBOS. ONLY SIX-LIMBED BODY MORPHOLOGIES HAVE BEEN FOUND IN THE FOSSIL RECORD, WITH THE MIDDLE AND HIND LIMBS CLEARLY ADAPTED FOR TRAVEL. THEY GENERALLY LIVED ON OPEN SAVANNAHS, WHILE ARDIPITHECUS PREFERRED WOODLAND ENVIRONMENTS. AUSTRALOPITHECINE BRAINS WERE SMALL--ABOUT 1/3RD THE SIZE OF MODERN HUMAN BRAINS, AND ONLY SLIGHTLY LARGER THAN THE BRAINS OF MODERN CHIMPANZEES.

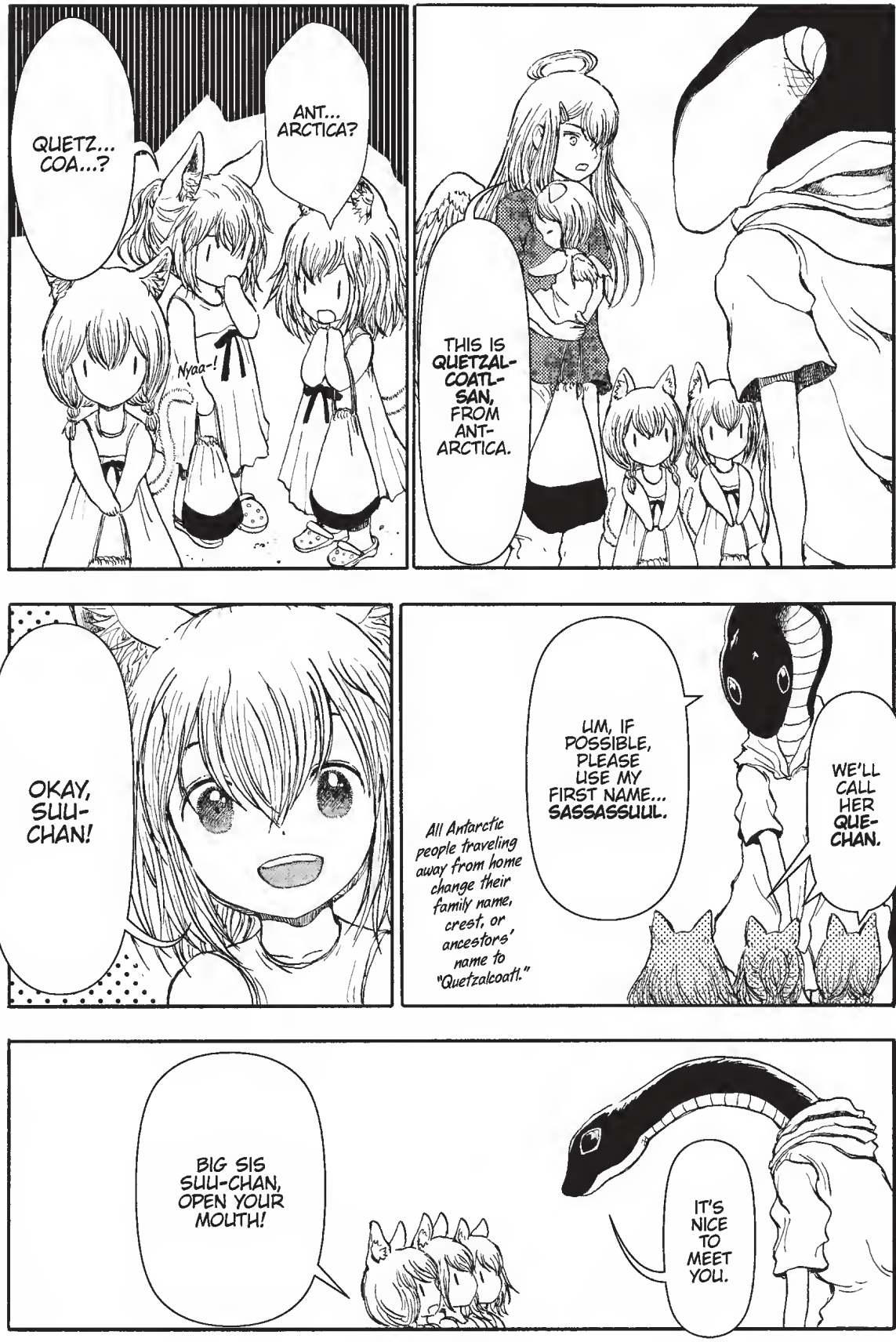
AUSTRALOPITHECINES WERE ABLE TO USE TOOLS LIKE OTHER MEMBERS OF FAMILY HOMINIDAE, BUT THEY WERE LONG BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO CREATE STONE TOOLS. A RECENT STUDY, HOWEVER, SUGGESTS THAT AUSTRALOPITHECUS AFARENSIS DID USE STONE TOOLS AS EARLY AS 3.4 MILLION YEARS AGO. AUSTRALOPITHECINE COMMUNICATION WAS LIKELY LIMITED TO CALLS AND CRIES RATHER THAN ORGANIZED LANGUAGE. A. AFRICANUS AND A. AFARENSIS ARE GENERALLY CONSIDERED THE MOST SIGNIFICANT AUSTRALOPITHECINE SUBSPECIES WITH REGARD TO THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN HUMANS.



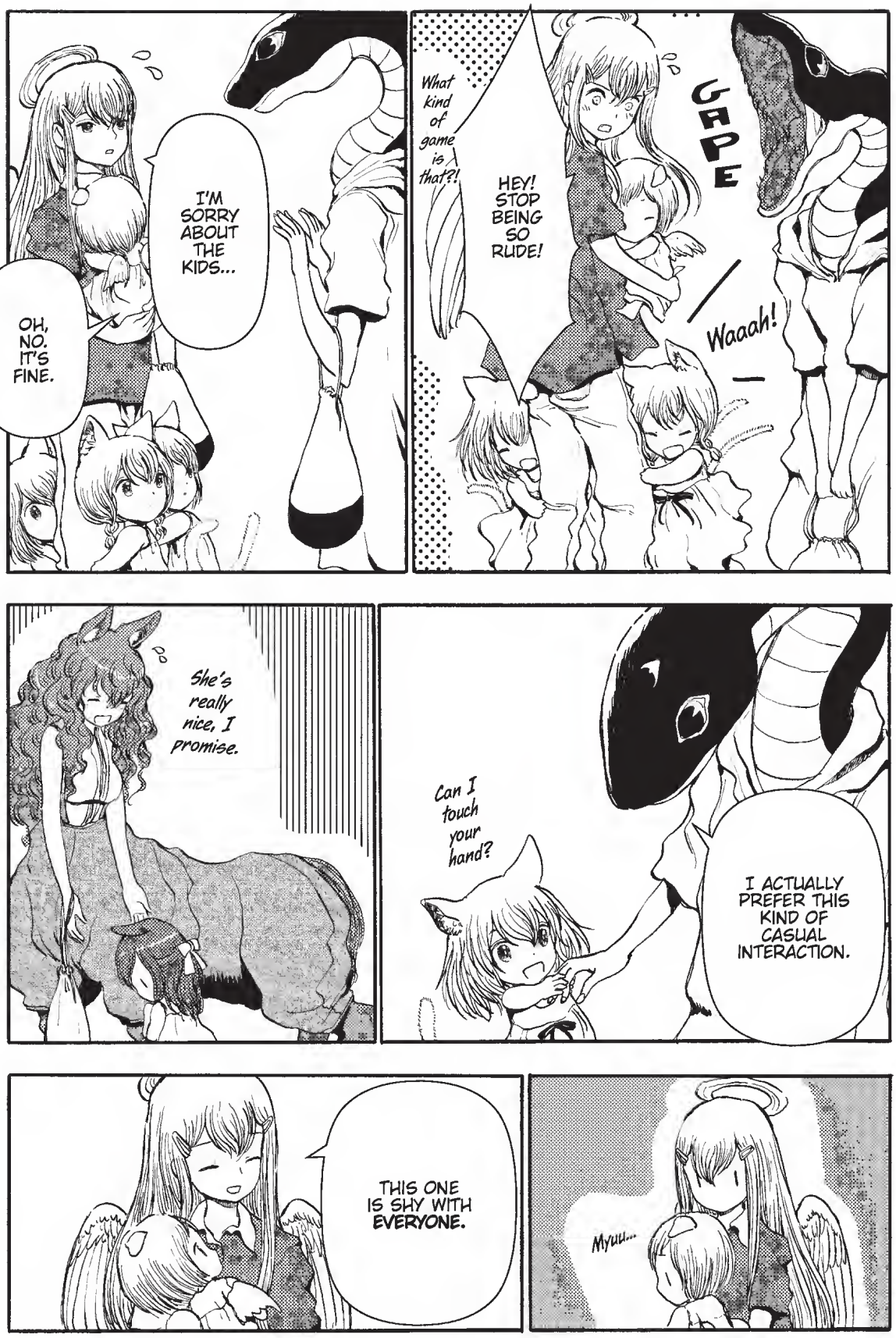
LOOM
SHE'S NOT A DINO-SAUR.
We saw it in a picture book.
IT'S A DINOSAUR-SAN!
And stop pointing! That's rude!

CHAPTER 17



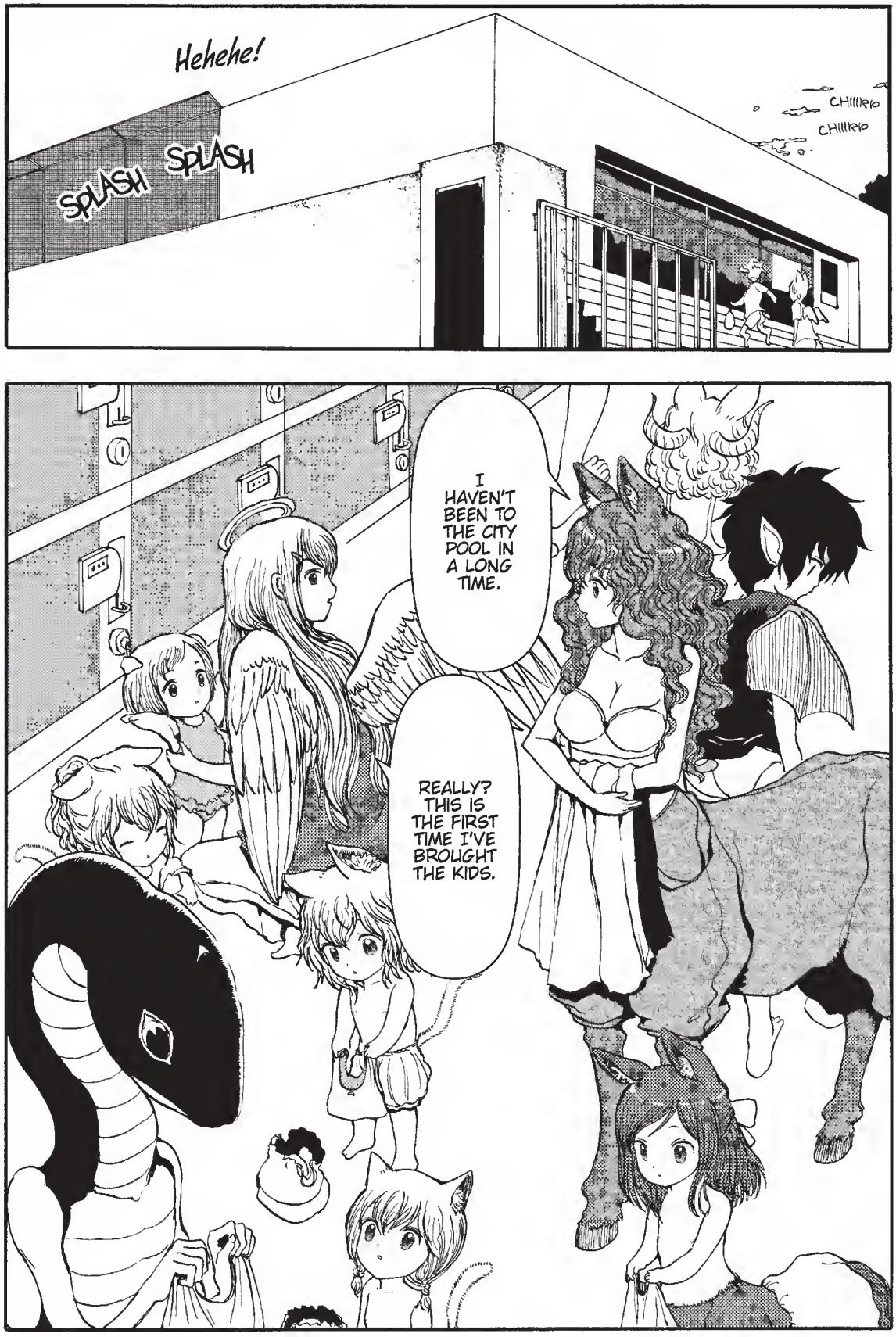

QUETZ... COA...?
ANT... ARCTICA?
Nyaa-!
THIS IS QUETZAL-COATL-SAN, FROM ANT-ARCTICA.
OKAY, SUU-CHAN!
All Antarctic people traveling away from home change their family name, crest, or ancestors' name to "Quetzalcoatl."
UM, IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE USE MY FIRST NAME... SASSASSUUL.
WE'LL CALL HER QUE-CHAN.
BIG SIS SUU-CHAN, OPEN YOUR MOUTH!
IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU.

OH...
Waaah!
GAPE
Ahh!
Noo!
TAP TAP TAP
OPEN YOUR MOUTH WIDE AGAIN.

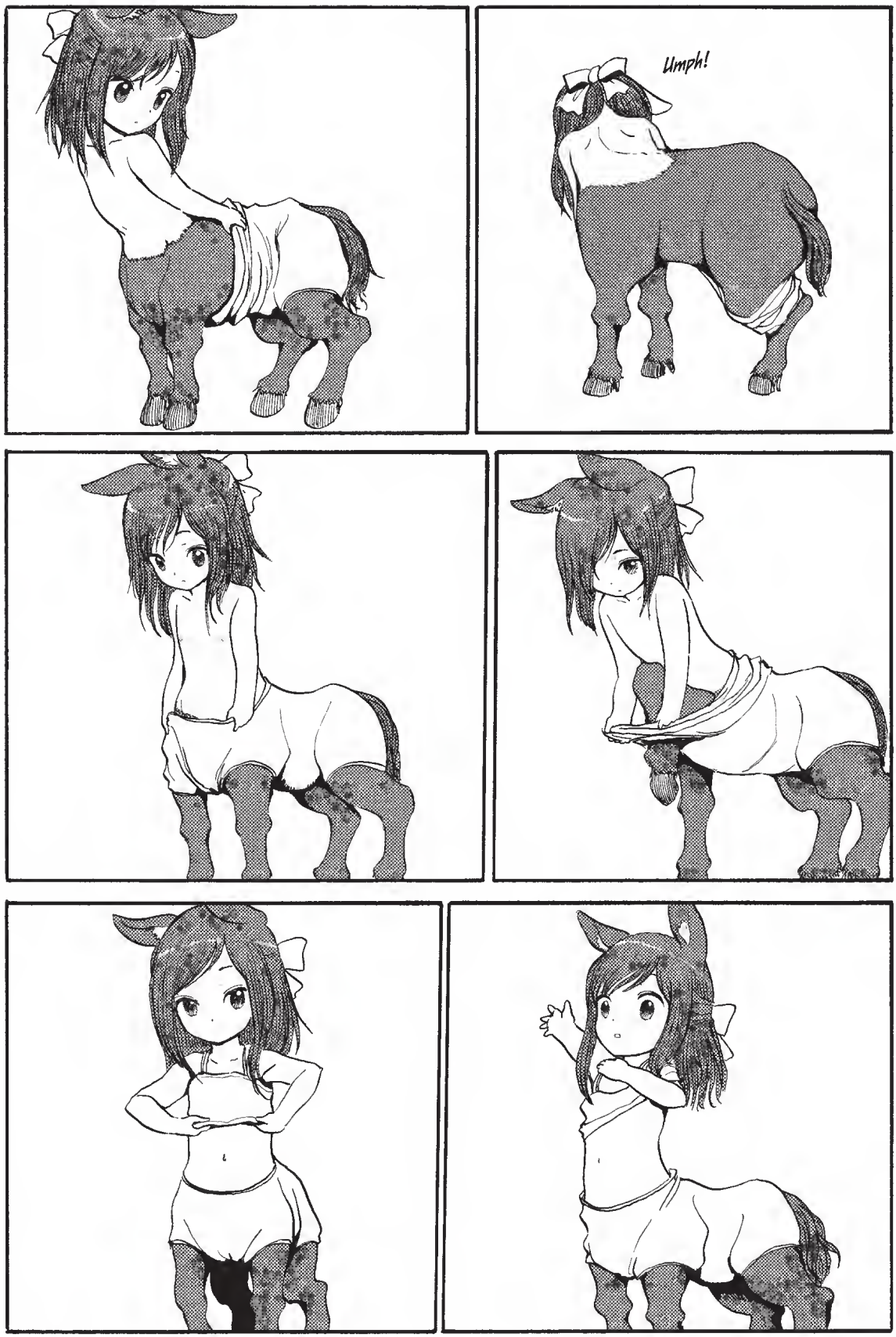

I'M SORRY ABOUT THE KIDS...
OH, NO. IT'S FINE.
What kind of game is that?!
HEY! STOP BEING SO RUDE!
GAPE
Waaah!
She's really nice, I promise.
Can I touch your hand?
I ACTUALLY PREFER THIS KIND OF CASUAL INTERACTION.
THIS ONE IS SHY WITH EVERYONE.
Myuu...

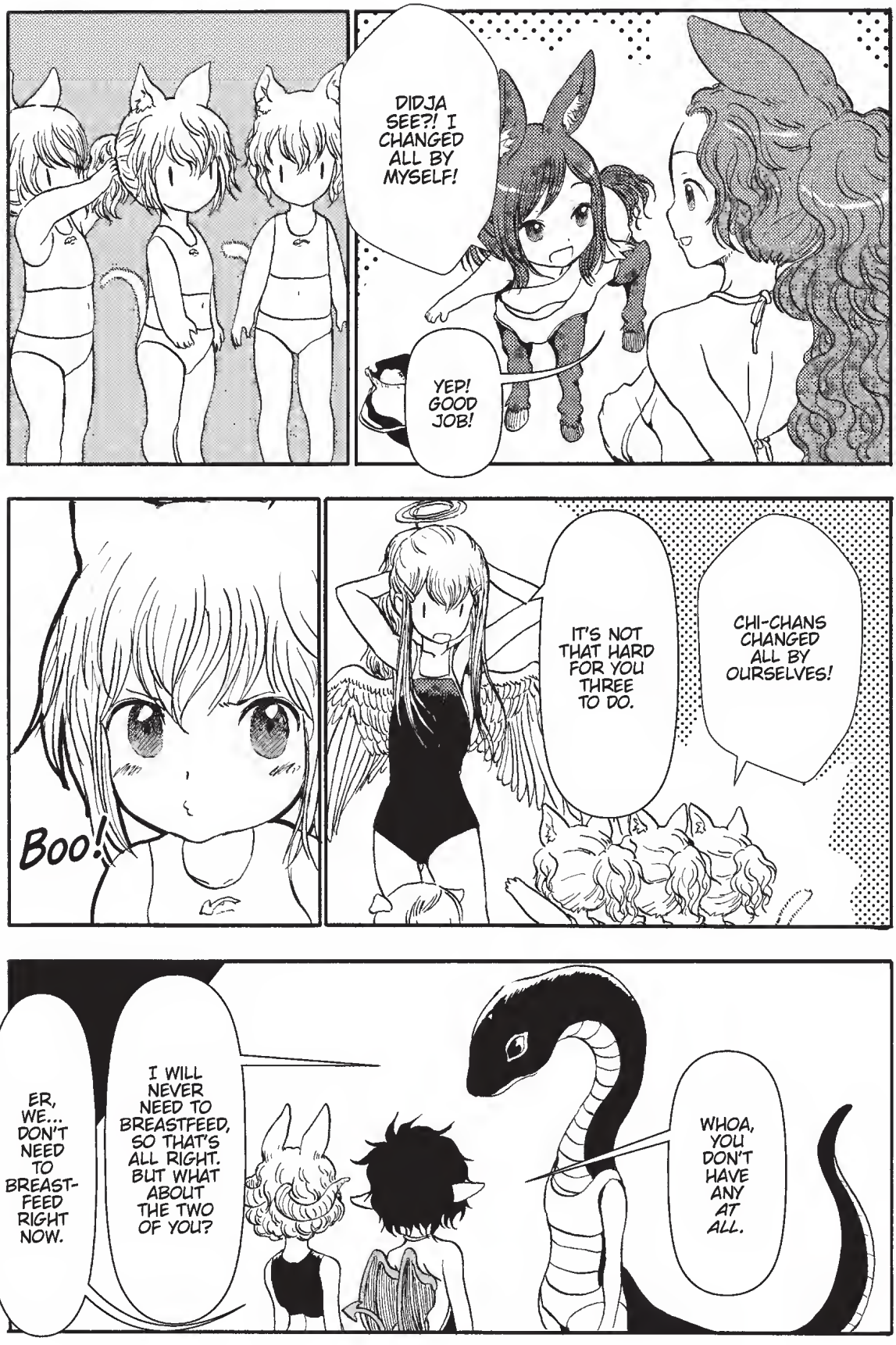
COME ON, BIG SISTER JUST SAID HELLO.
HELLO, SUE-CHAN.
YOUR PERSONALITY IS SO DIFFERENT FROM THE CLASS PRESIDENT'S.
NUZZLE
NUZZLE
Mmgh...
HE...LL...O.
BUT THE LITTLE CHI-SUKES ARE JUST LIKE THE CLASS PRESIDENT.
I can't do that! My neck will break!
Shino-chan, over here!

Hmph!
IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, EVERYONE CALLED ME "THE LITTLE DOLL" BEHIND MY BACK.
WHAT ?!
BIG SIS, WE GOT ALL SWEATY!
IT'LL WASH OFF ONCE YOU GET IN THE POOL.
THAT'S RIGHT! POOL!
DON'T RUN!
HURRY UP, BIG SISTERS!

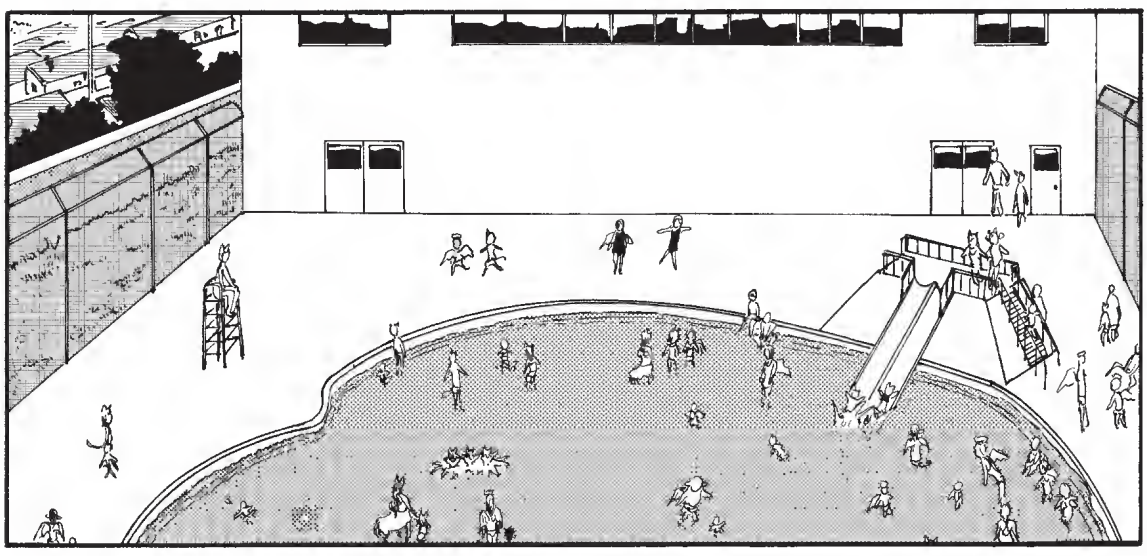

Hehehe!
SPLASH
SPLASH
CHIIIRP
CHIIIRP
I HAVEN'T BEEN TO THE CITY POOL IN A LONG TIME.
REALLY? THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE BROUGHT THE KIDS.

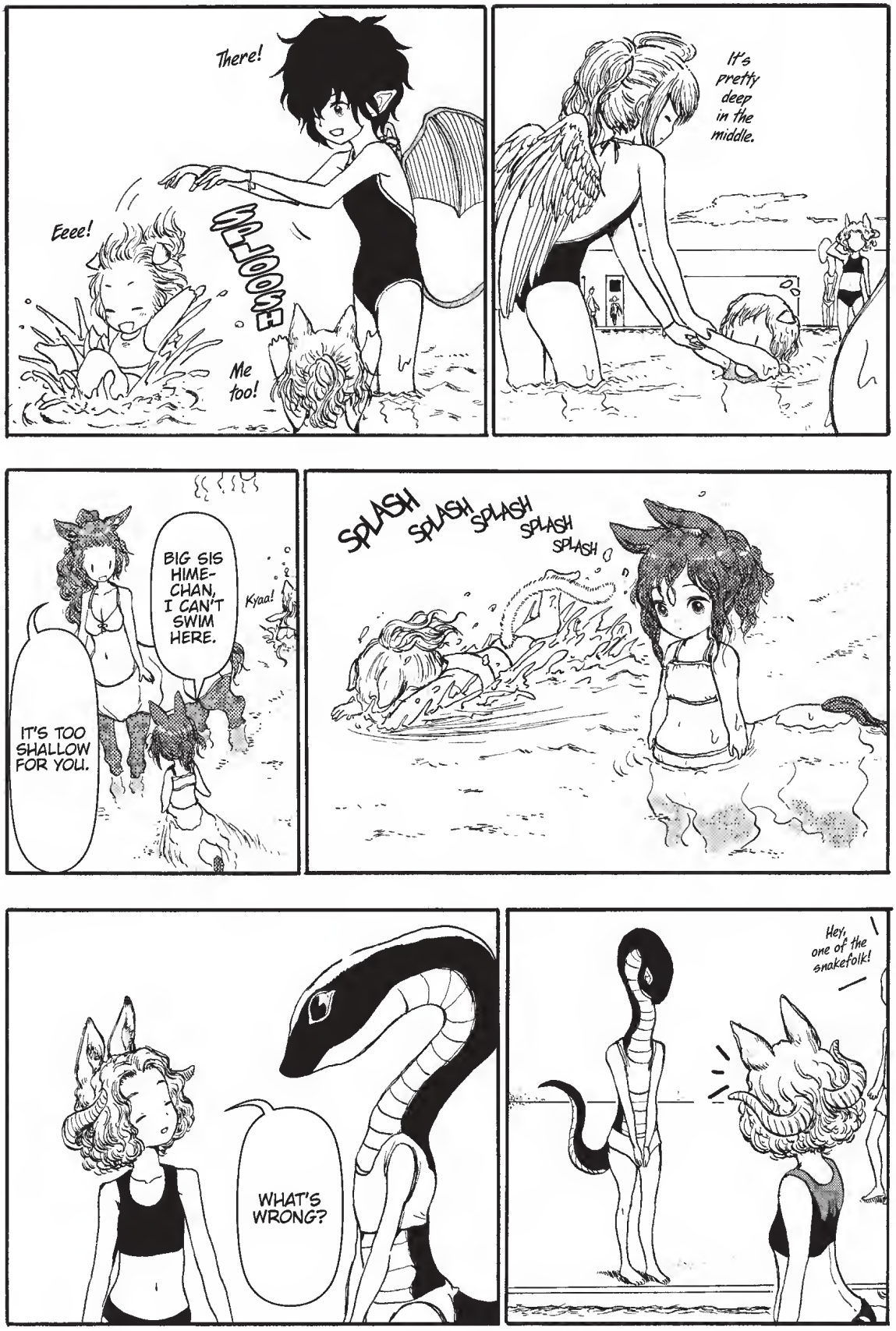
JUST GETTING HERE IS SO TIR-ING...
Hee hee!
GIGGLE
Ha ha!

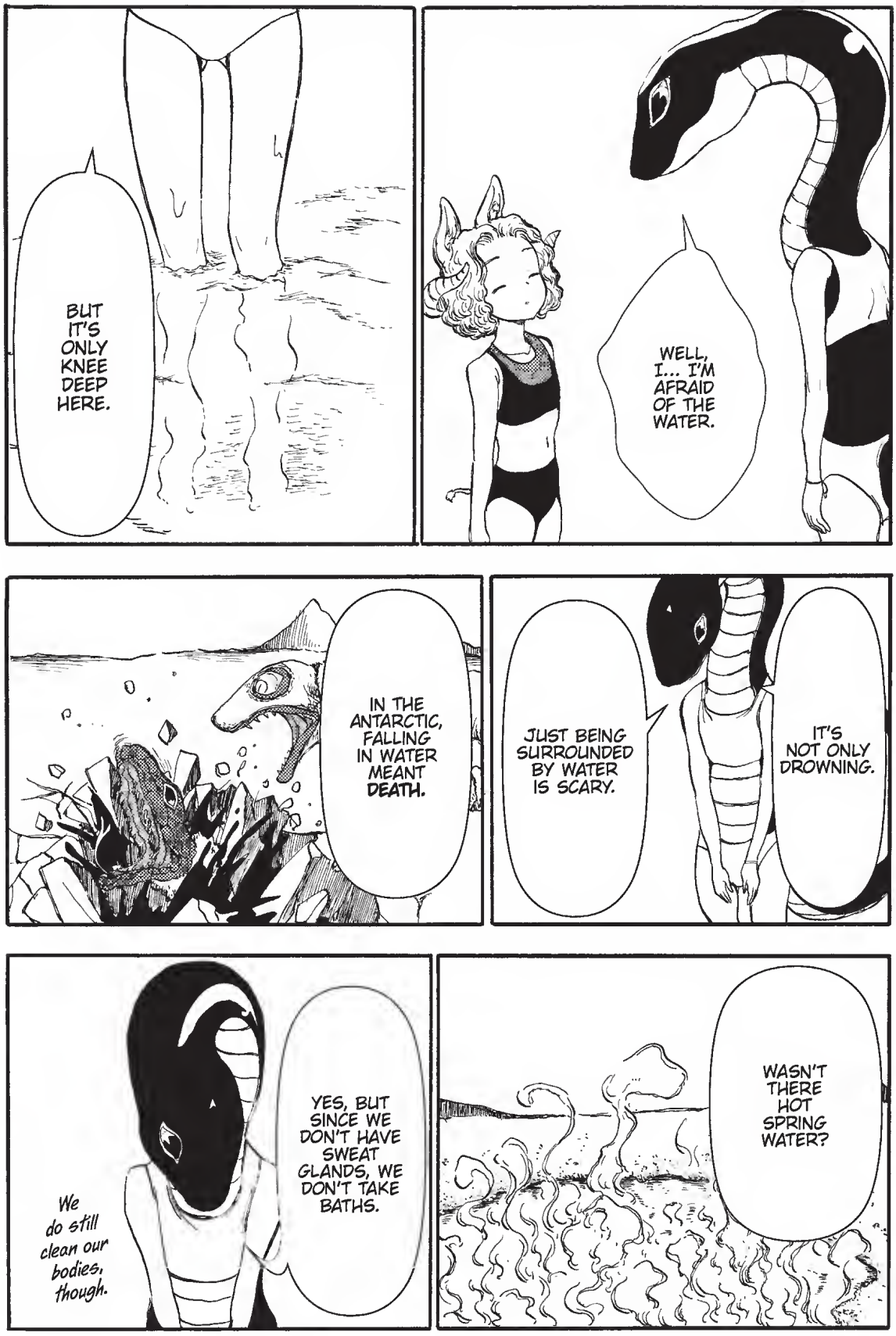

Umph!

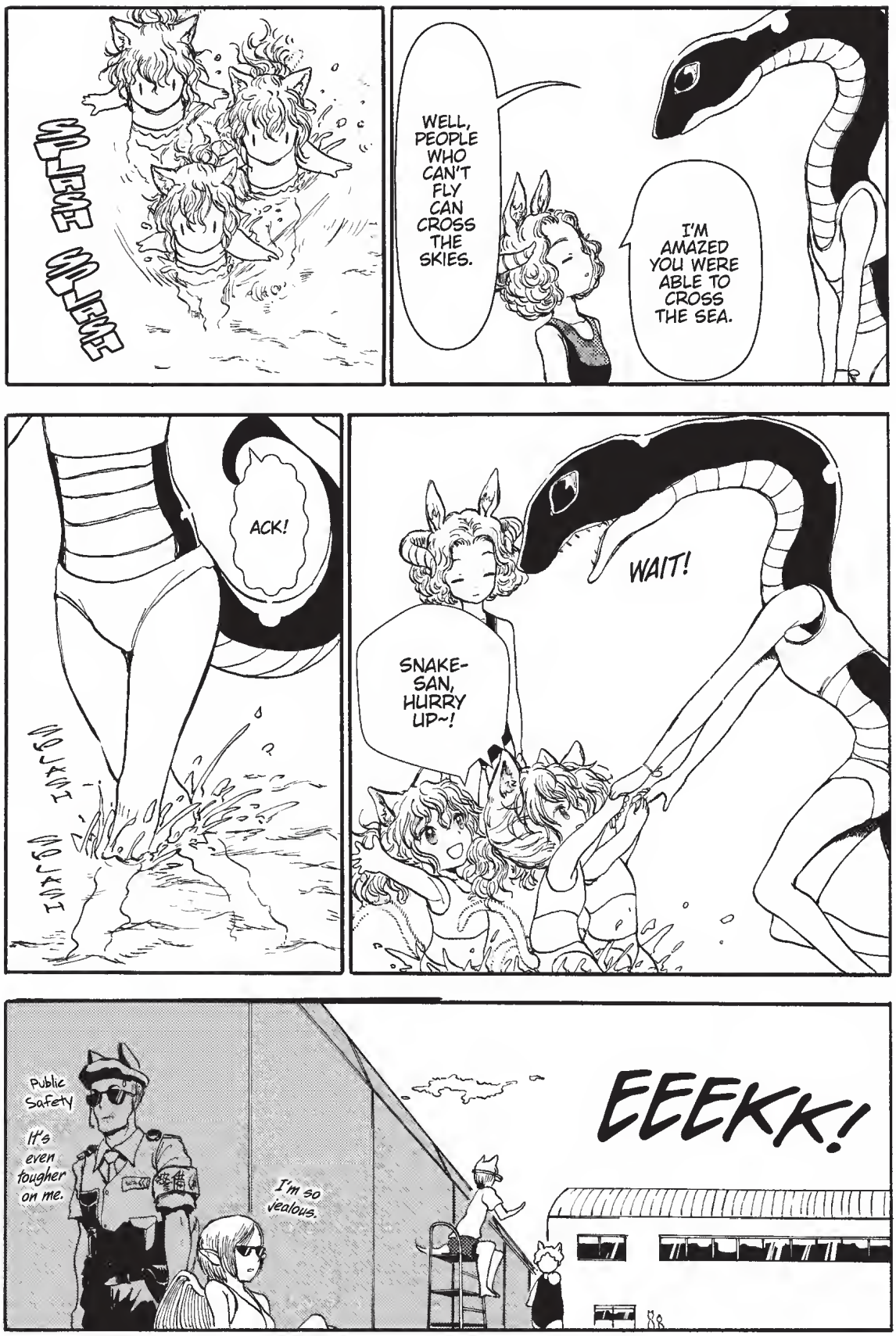

DIDJA SEE?! I CHANGED ALL BY MYSELF!
YEP! GOOD JOB!
Boo!
IT'S NOT THAT HARD FOR YOU THREE TO DO.
CHI-CHANS CHANGED ALL BY OURSELVES!
ER, WE... DON'T NEED TO BREAST-FEED RIGHT NOW.
I WILL NEVER NEED TO BREASTFEED, SO THAT'S ALL RIGHT. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE TWO OF YOU?
WHOA, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY AT ALL.

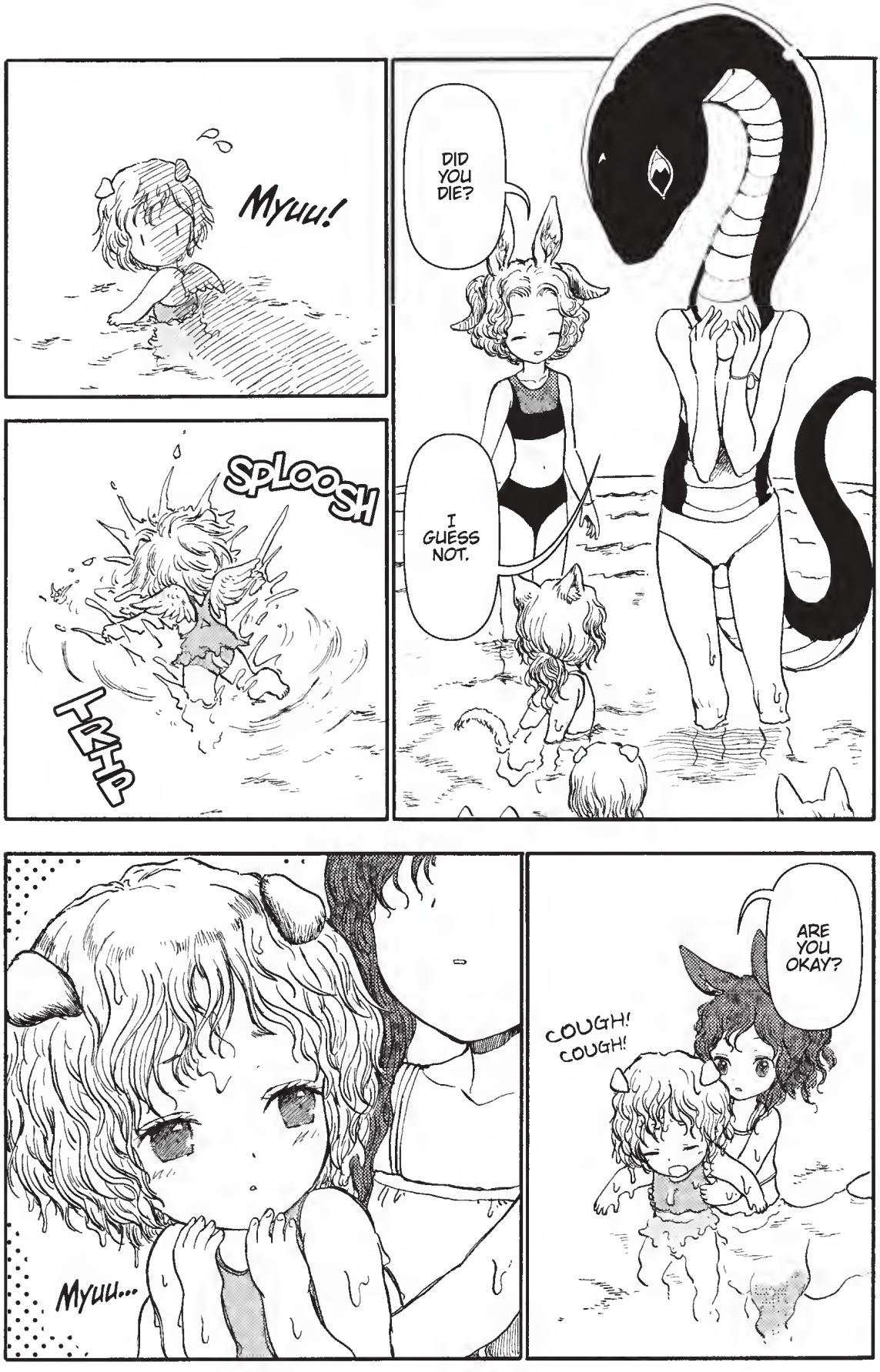
Hey! No running!

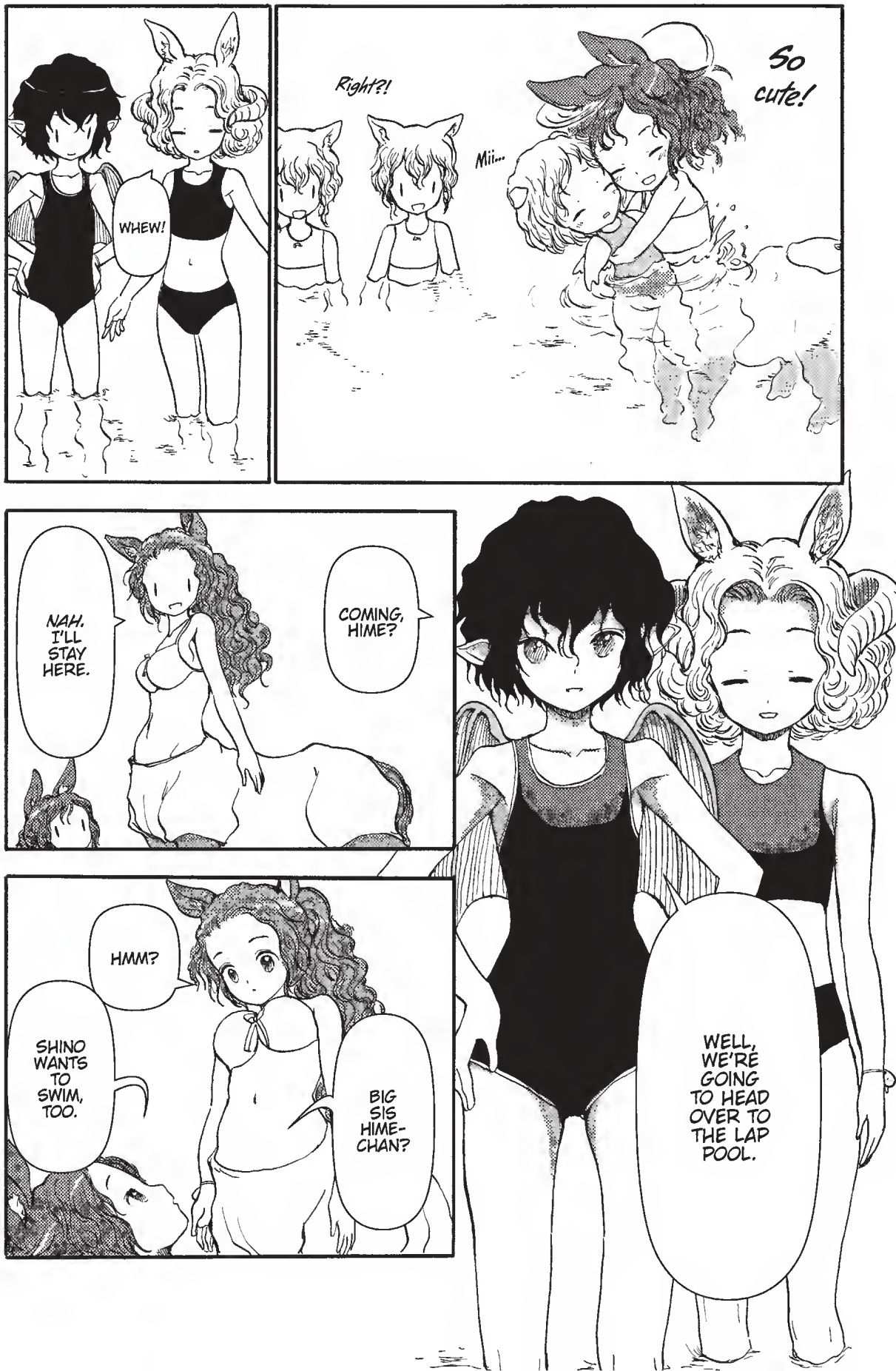


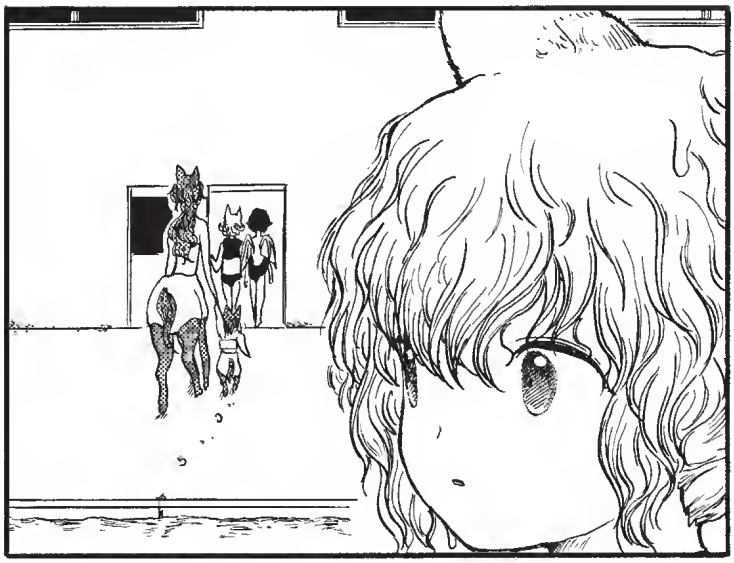

There!
Eeee!
GLOOM
Me too!
It's pretty deep in the middle.
BIG SIS HIME-CHAN, I CAN'T SWIM HERE.
Kyaa!
IT'S TOO SHALLOW FOR YOU.
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
WHAT'S WRONG?
Hey, one of the snakefolk!

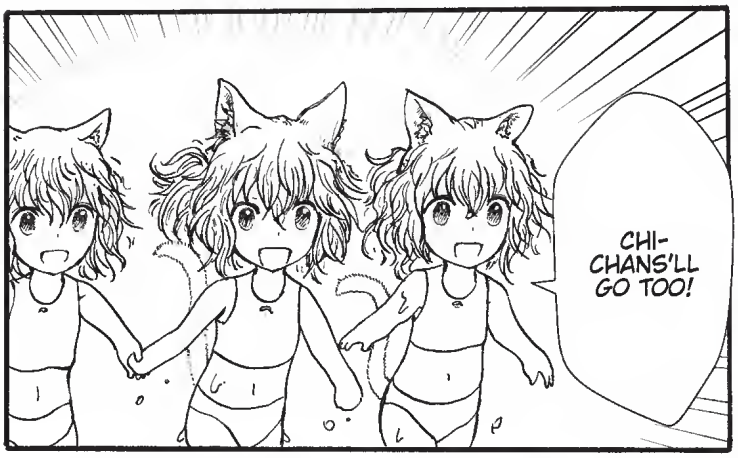

BUT IT'S ONLY KNEE DEEP HERE.
WELL, I... I'M AFRAID OF THE WATER.
IN THE ANTARCTIC, FALLING IN WATER MEANT DEATH.
JUST BEING SURROUNDED BY WATER IS SCARY.
IT'S NOT ONLY DROWNING.
We do still clean our bodies, though.
YES, BUT SINCE WE DON'T HAVE SWEAT GLANDS, WE DON'T TAKE BATHS.
WASN'T THERE HOT SPRING WATER?


SPLASH SPLASH
WELL, PEOPLE WHO CAN'T FLY CAN CROSS THE SKIES.
I'M AMAZED YOU WERE ABLE TO CROSS THE SEA.
ACK!
SPLASH SPLASH
WAIT!
SNAKE-SAN, HURRY UP~!
Public Safety
It's even tougher on me.
I'm so jealous.
EEEKK!

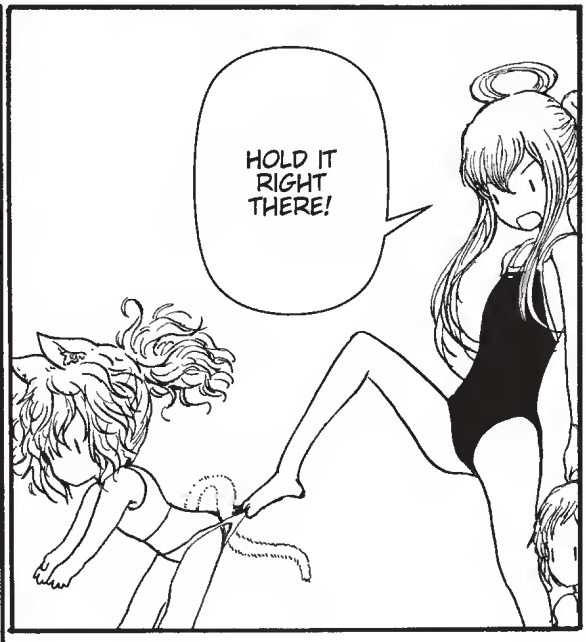

Myuu!
DID YOU DIE?
I GUESS NOT.
SPLOOSH
TRIP
ARE YOU OKAY?
COUGH! COUGH!
Myuu...

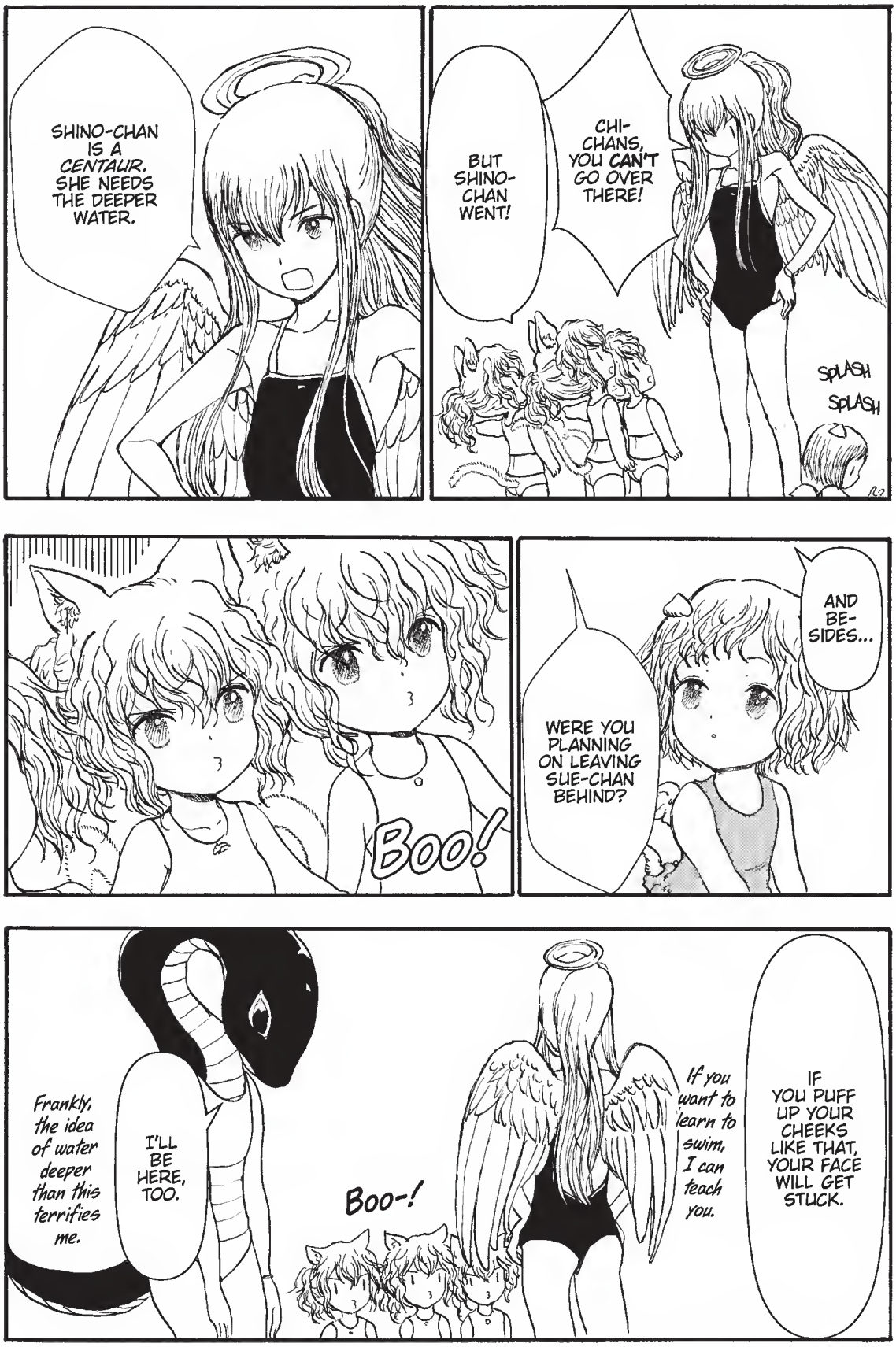

WHEW!
Right?!
Mii...
So cute!
NAH. I'LL STAY HERE.
COMING, HIME?
HMM?
SHINO WANTS TO SWIM, TOO.
BIG SIS HIME-CHAN?
WELL, WE'RE GOING TO HEAD OVER TO THE LAP POOL.

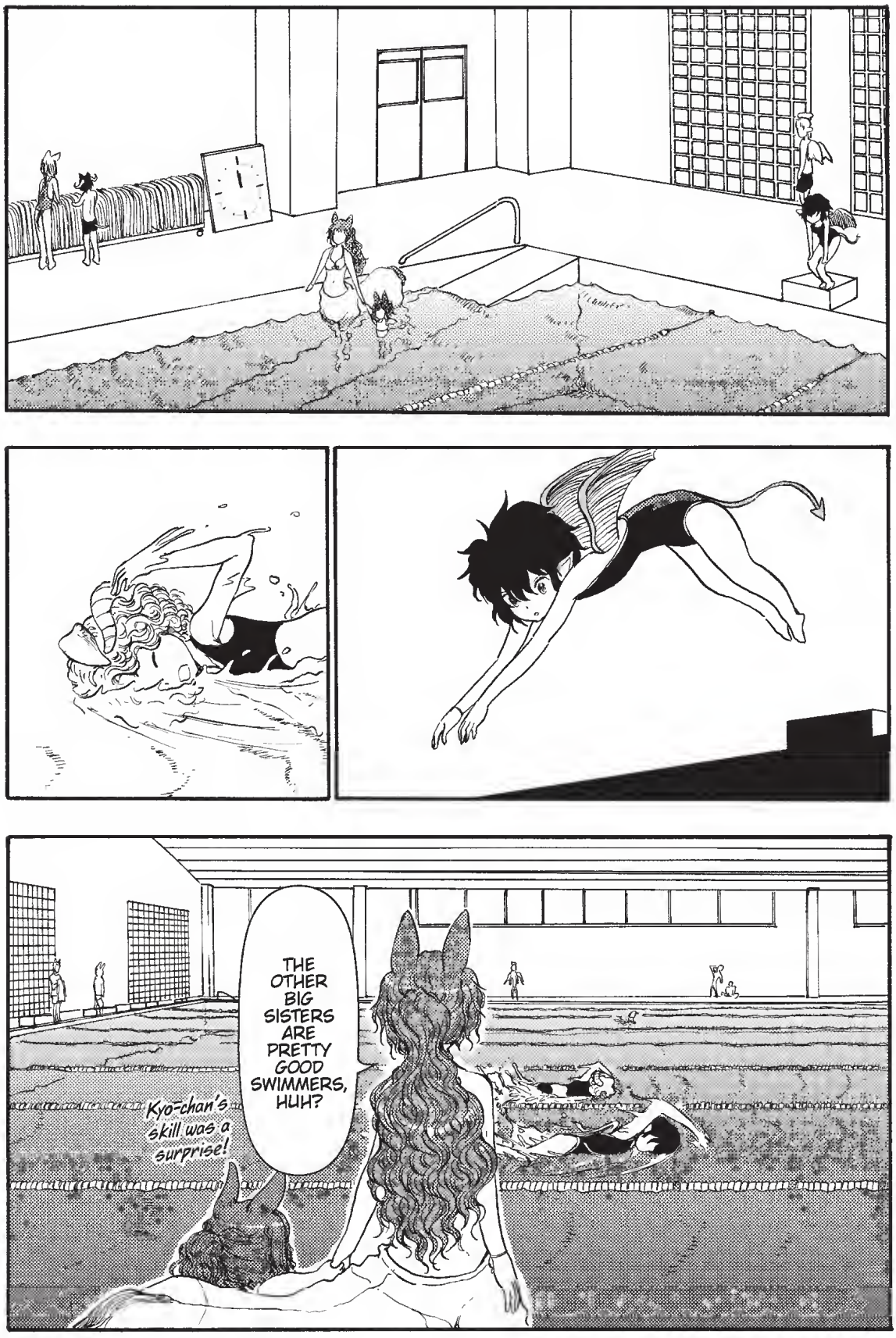


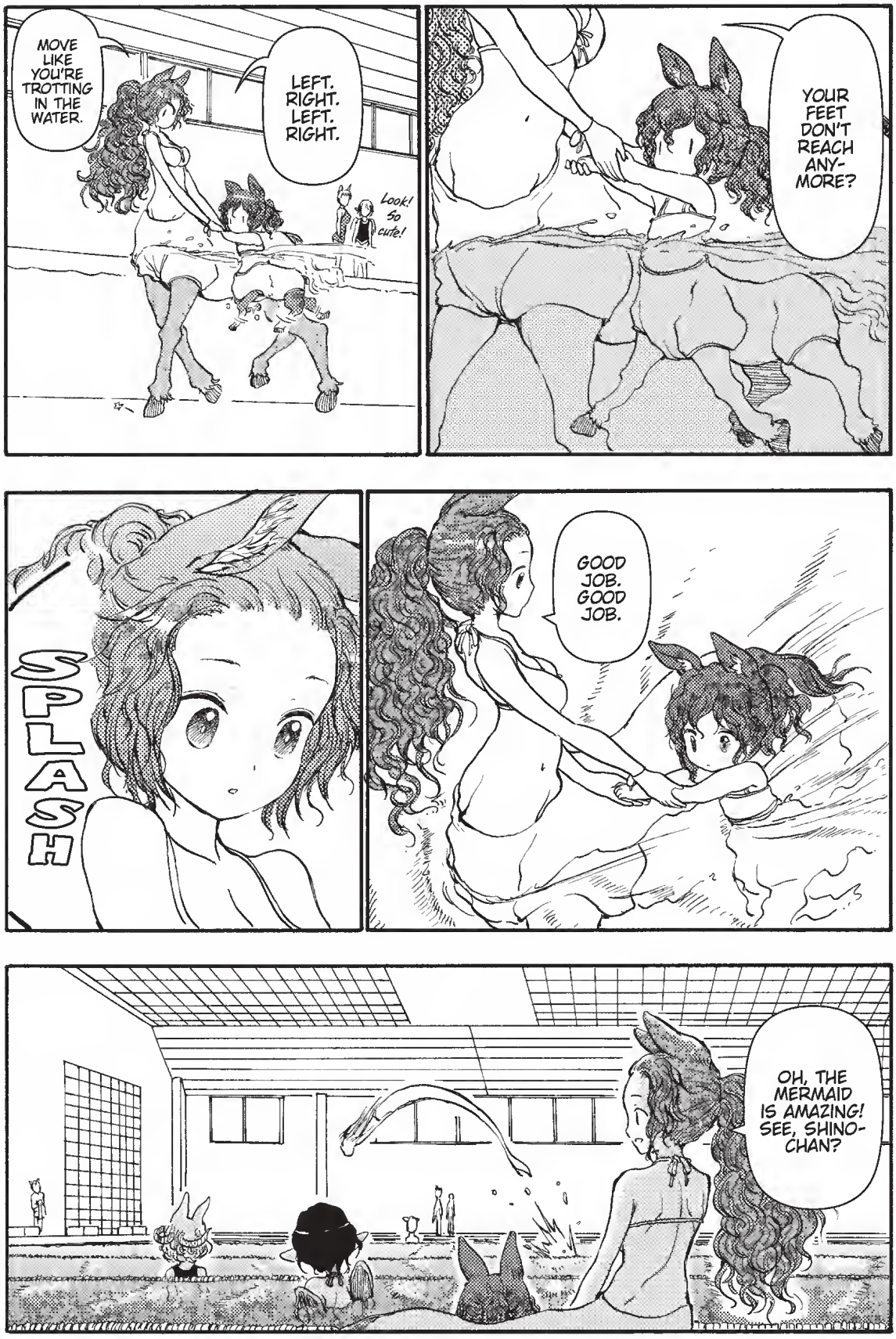

CHI-CHANS'LL GO TOO!

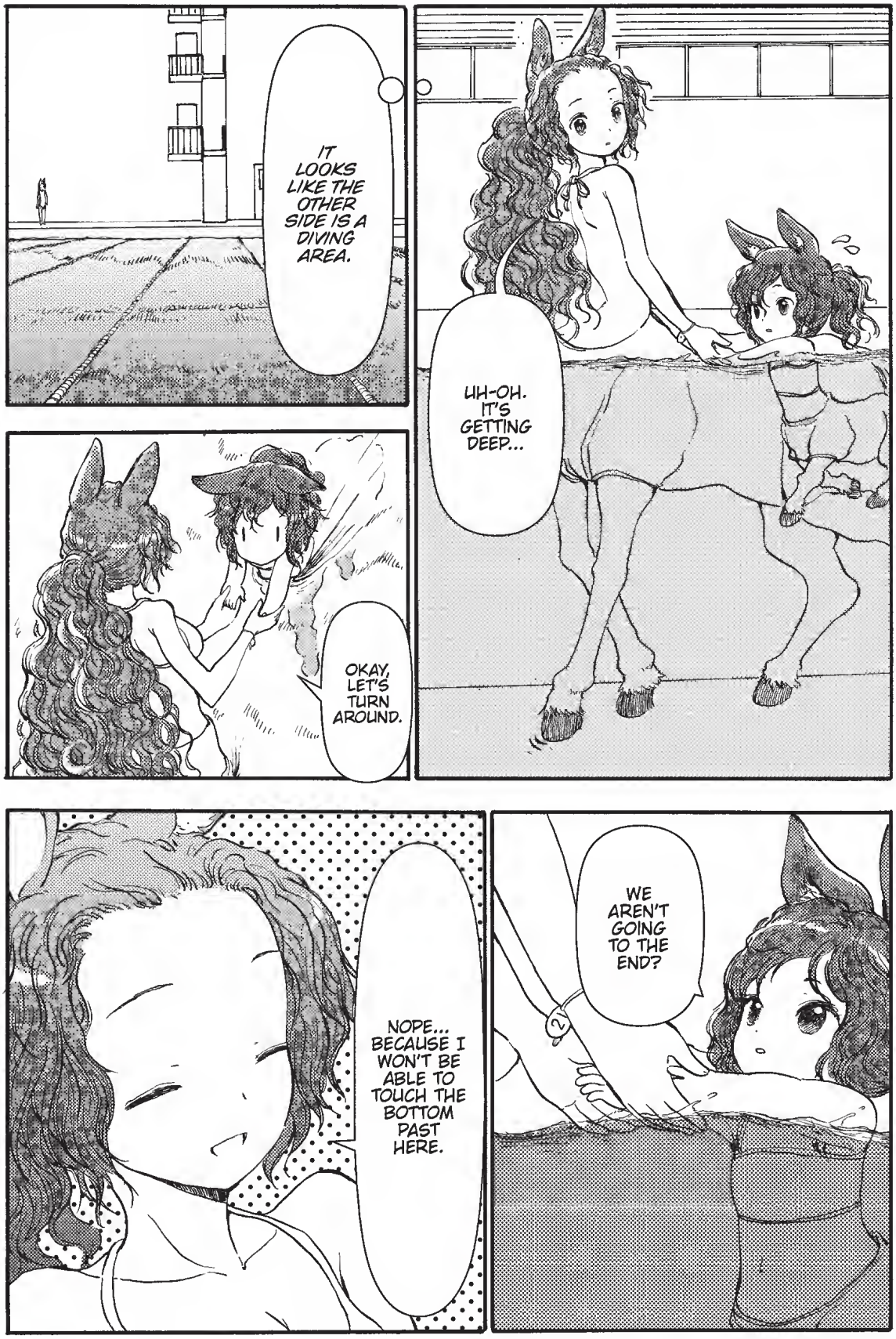
I'M NOT A PERVERT, I'M YOUR SISTER.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? PER-VERT!


HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

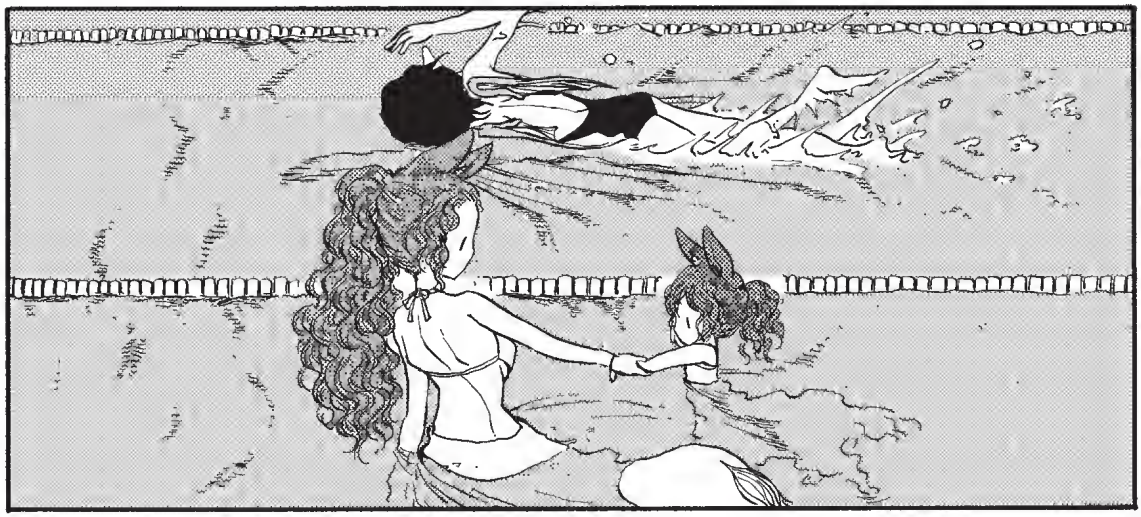

SHINO-CHAN IS A CENTAUR. SHE NEEDS THE DEEPER WATER.
CHI-CHANS, YOU CAN'T GO OVER THERE!
BUT SHINO-CHAN WENT!
SPLASH SPLASH
Boo!
AND BE-SIDES...
WERE YOU PLANNING ON LEAVING SUE-CHAN BEHIND?
IF YOU PUFF UP YOUR CHEEKS LIKE THAT, YOUR FACE WILL GET STUCK.
If you want to learn to swim, I can teach you.
Boo-!
I'LL BE HERE, TOO.
Frankly, the idea of water deeper than this terrifies me.

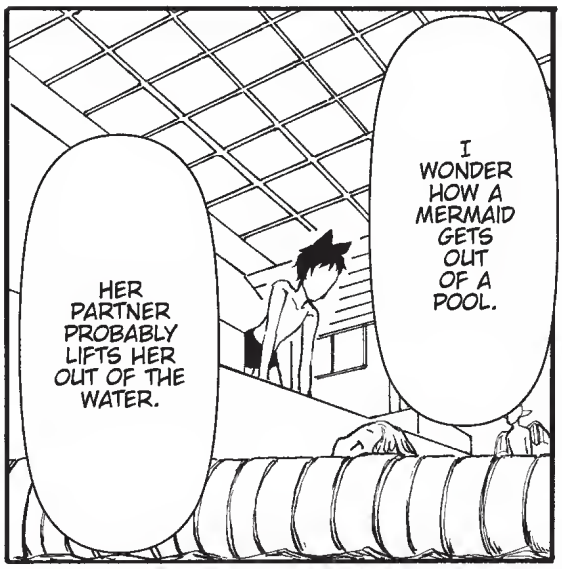

THE OTHER BIG SISTERS ARE PRETTY GOOD SWIMMERS, HUH?
Kyō-chan's skill was a surprise!

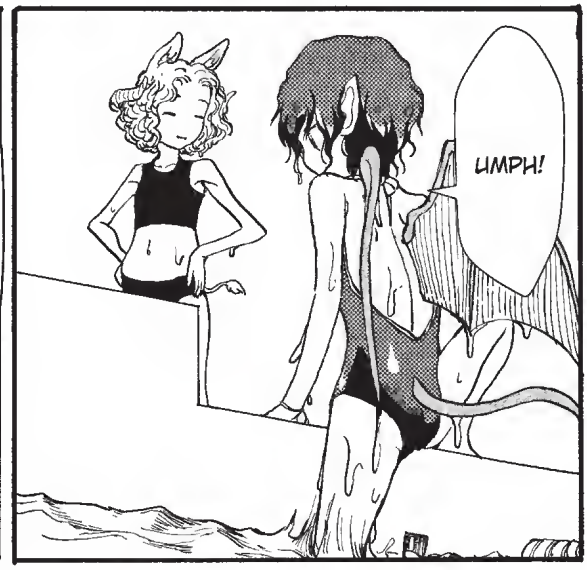

MOVE LIKE YOU'RE TROTTING IN THE WATER.
LEFT. RIGHT. LEFT. RIGHT.
Look! So cute!
YOUR FEET DON'T REACH ANY-MORE?
SPLASH
GOOD JOB. GOOD JOB.
OH, THE MERMAID IS AMAZING! SEE, SHINO-CHAN?

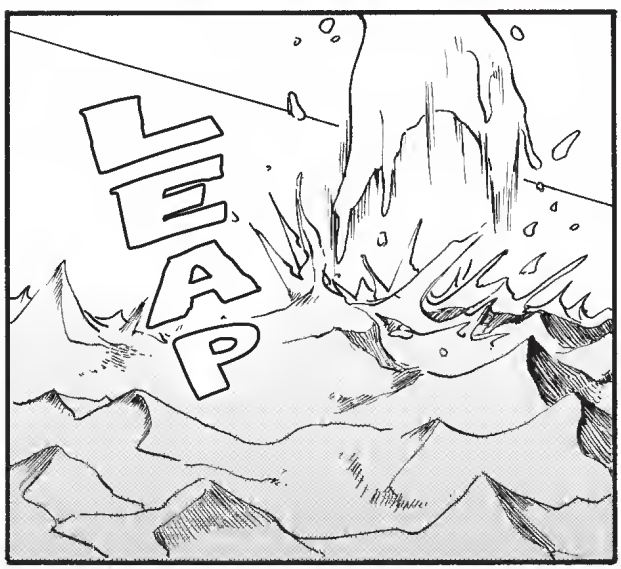

IT LOOKS LIKE THE OTHER SIDE IS A DIVING AREA.
UH-OH. IT'S GETTING DEEP...
OKAY, LET'S TURN AROUND.
WE AREN'T GOING TO THE END?
NOPE... BECAUSE I WON'T BE ABLE TO TOUCH THE BOTTOM PAST HERE.

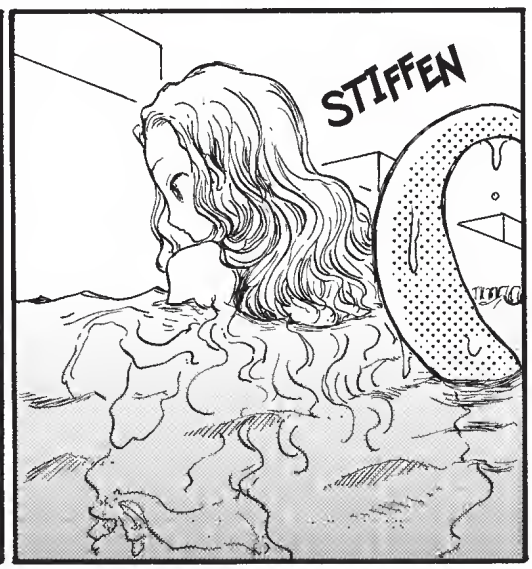
Okay, turn!
BIG SIS CAN'T SWIM?
I CAN SWIM, BUT IF SOMETHING HAPPENED, THERE'S NO ONE HERE WHO CAN SAVE ME.
KICK KICK KICK KICK
OKAY, JUST RELAX! I WON'T LET GO.
GOOD JOB! THINK I CAN LET GO SOON?

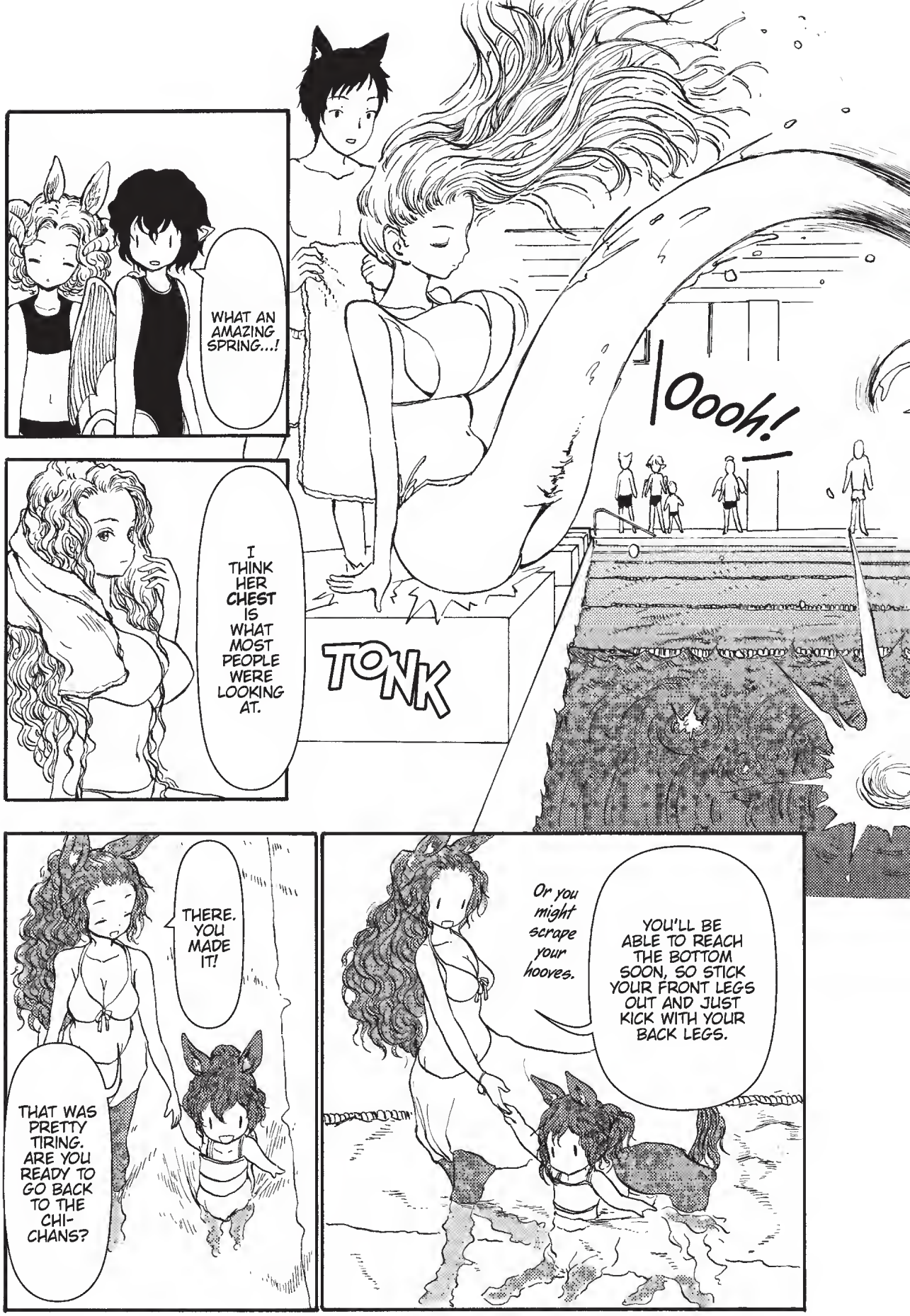



I WONDER HOW A MERMAID GETS OUT OF A POOL.
HER PARTNER PROBABLY LIFTS HER OUT OF THE WATER.


UMPH!

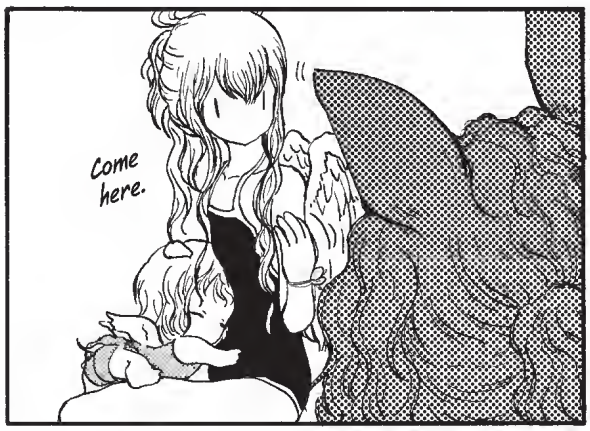

LEAP

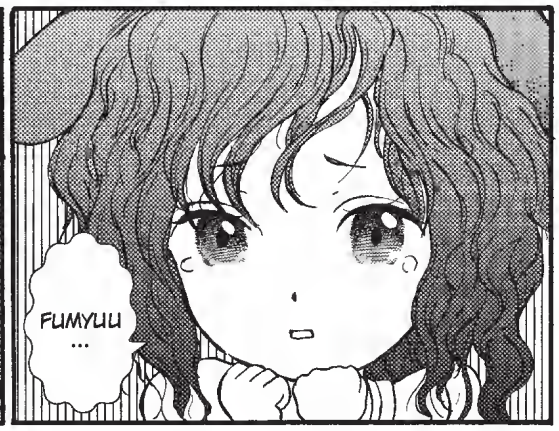

STIFFEN

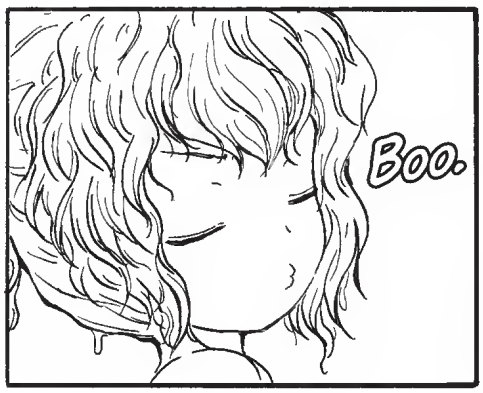

WHAT AN AMAZING SPRING...!
I THINK HER CHEST IS WHAT MOST PEOPLE WERE LOOKING AT.
TONK
Oooh!
THERE. YOU MADE IT!
THAT WAS PRETTY TIRING. ARE YOU READY TO GO BACK TO THE CHI-CHANS?
Or you might scrape your hooves.
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO REACH THE BOTTOM SOON, SO STICK YOUR FRONT LEGS OUT AND JUST KICK WITH YOUR BACK LEGS.

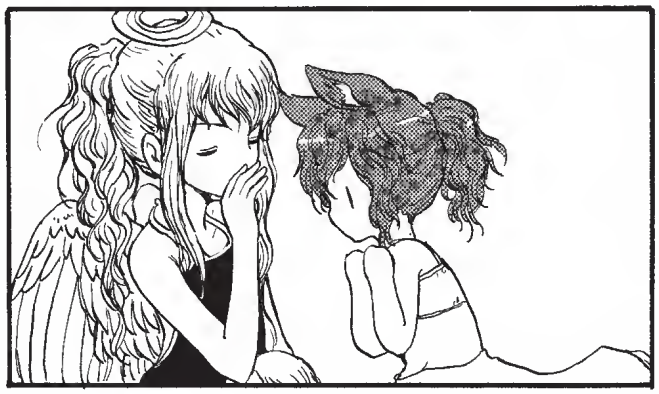
OH.
SWIM-MING PRAC-TICE?
NYA!
Hmmph!
CHI-CHANS, LET'S PLAY!

GIRLS!
SHINO-CHAN SHOULD JUST PLAY OVER AT THE DEEP POOL.


Come here.


FUMYUU ...

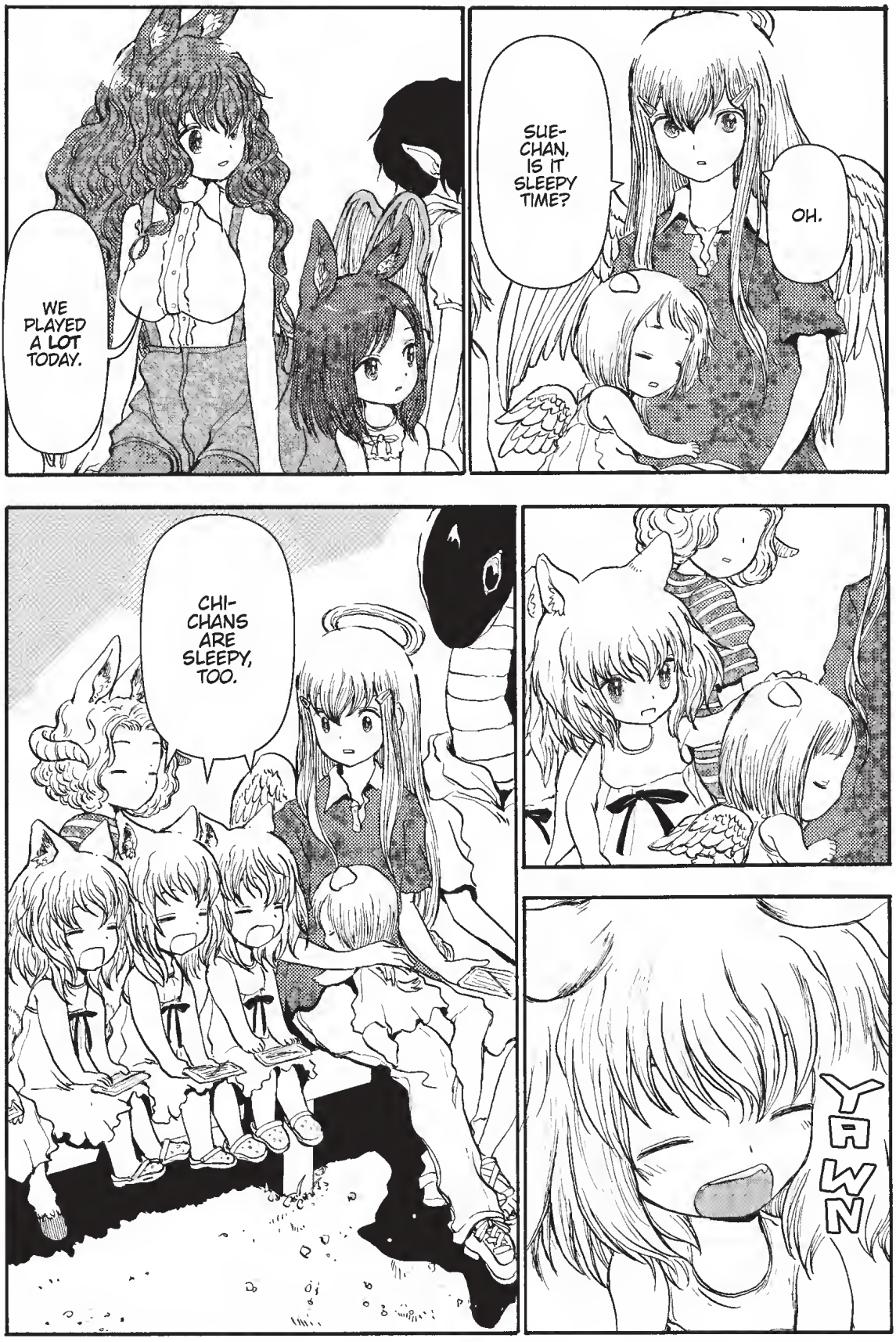

Boo.



SPLORT
WHAT DO YOU WANT--?!
CHI-CHAN.
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--AH?!
Eeee!

Ha ha!
There!
Nyaa!

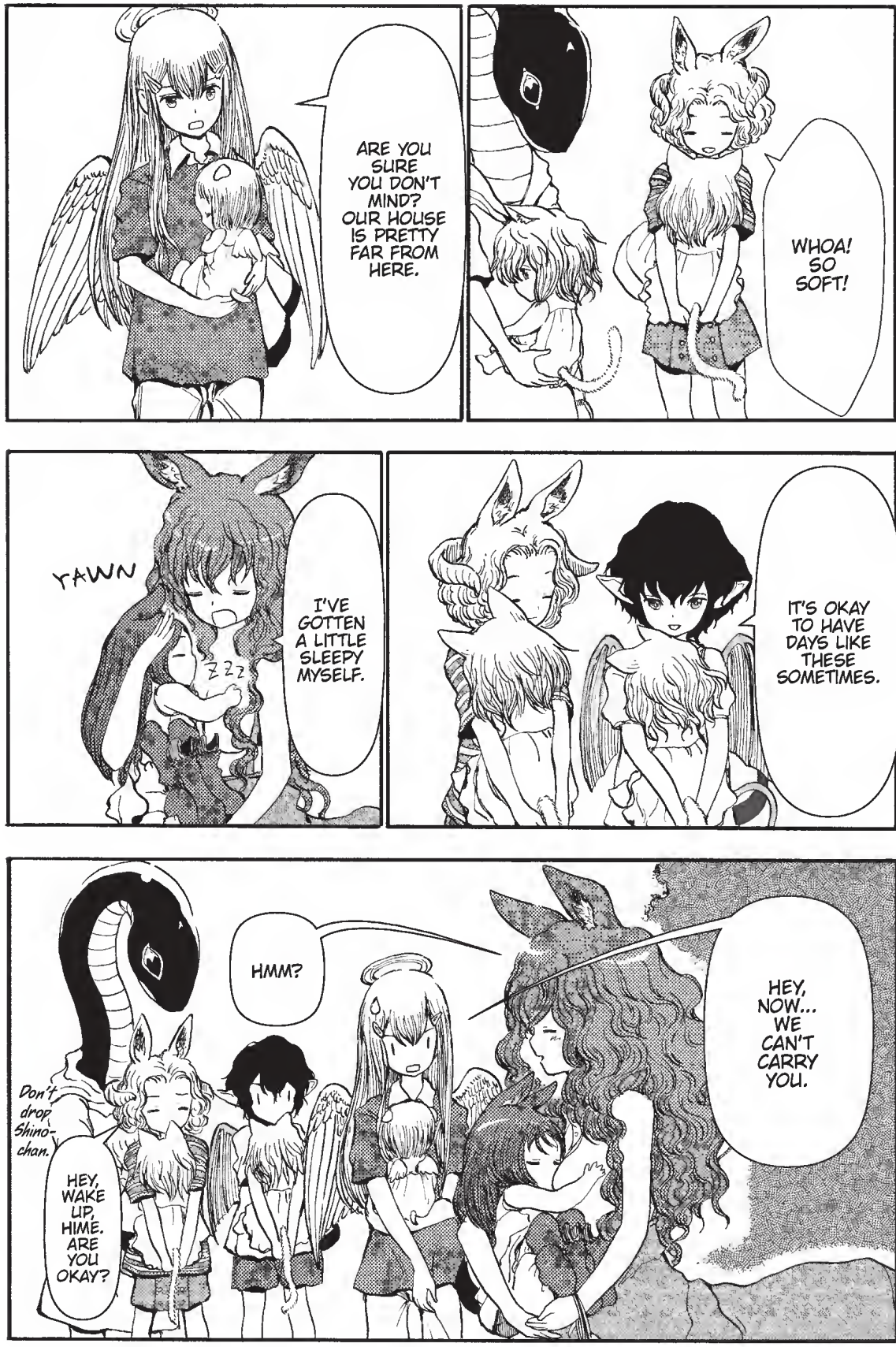
O D E N
IS IT YUMMY?
WARMS YOU RIGHT UP.
NICE AFTER A COLD POOL.
NOD
NOD


WE PLAYED A LOT TODAY.
SUE-CHAN, IS IT SLEEPY TIME?
OH.
CHI-CHANS ARE SLEEPY, TOO.
YAWN

I'M SORRY, BUT YOU CAN'T ALL NAP.
They're tuckered out.
YOU TOO, SHINO-CHAN?
I CAN'T CARRY YOU ALL HOME.
YOU ONLY HAVE ONE BIG SISTER.
HOW COME?!
IT'S SUPER NOT FAIR~!
WHY DON'T WE HAVE THREE BIG SIS-TERS?!
SHINO-CHAN HAS A BIG SISTER ALL TO HERSELF!

DON'T LIKE THAT...
IF YOU HAD THREE BIG SISTERS, YOU WOULD HAVE *THREE TIMES* THE NAGGING.
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!
Nyaa?
WELL, TODAY IS SPECIAL, SO YOU CAN ALL NAP.
Nya!
TODAY, THERE *ARE* THREE OTHER BIG SISTERS HERE.

SNORE


ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T MIND? OUR HOUSE IS PRETTY FAR FROM HERE.
WHOA! SO SOFT!
YAWN
I'VE GOTTEN A LITTLE SLEEPY MYSELF.
IT'S OKAY TO HAVE DAYS LIKE THESE SOMETIMES.
HMM?
HEY, NOW... WE CAN'T CARRY YOU.
Don't drop Shino-chan.
HEY, WAKE UP, HIME. ARE YOU OKAY?

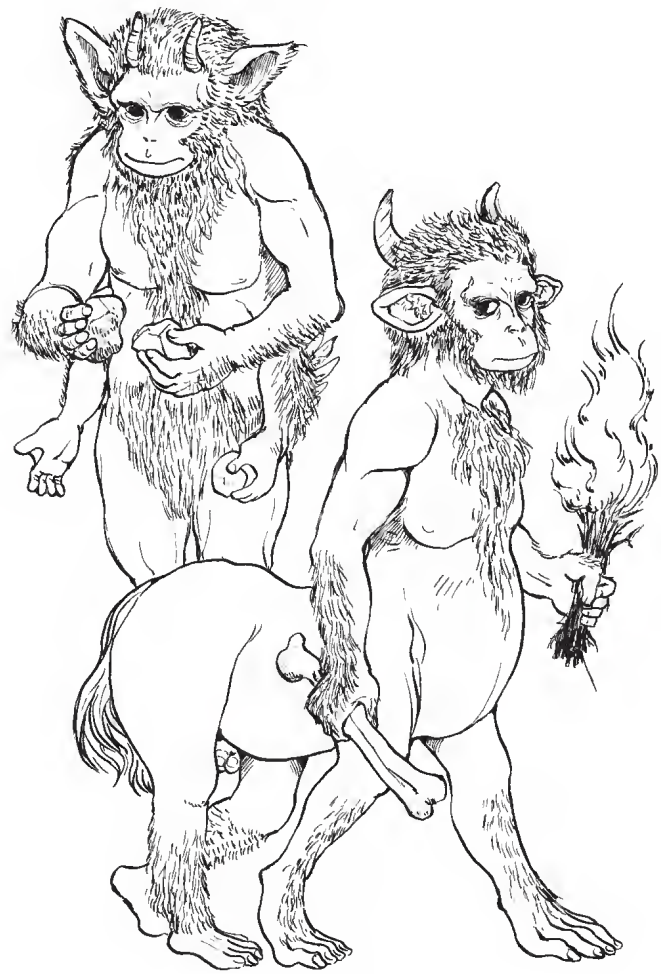
A CentaUr's Life

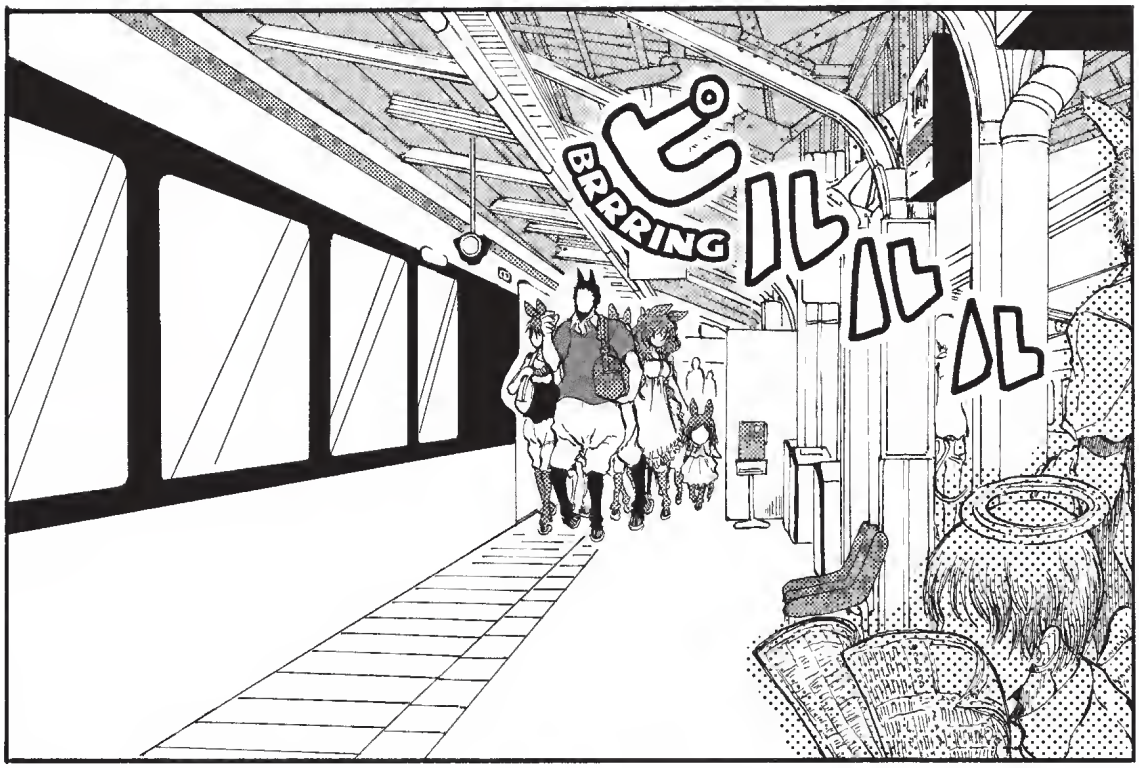
EXPLORING HUMAN ANCESTRY: SPECIES HOMO ERECTUS

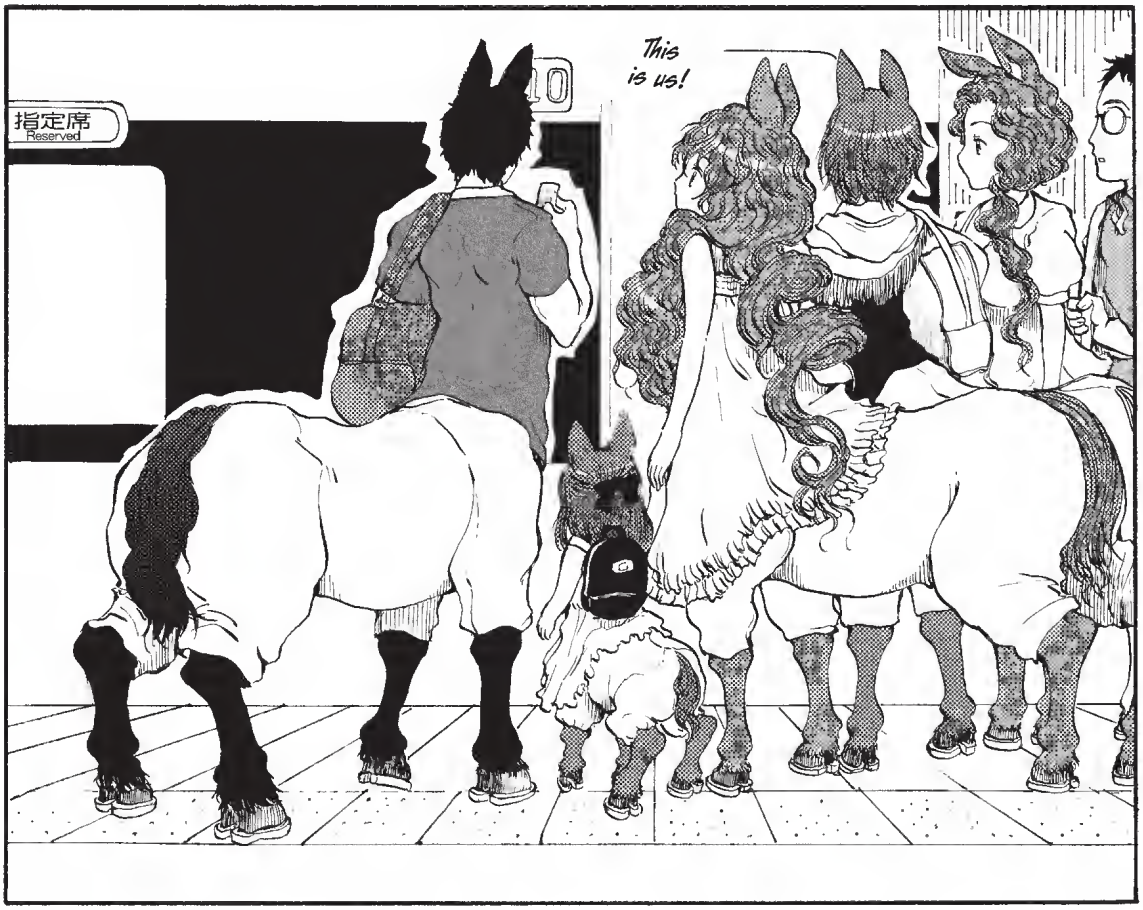
PROBABLY A DISTANT ANCESTOR OF MODERN HUMANS, *HOMO ERECTUS* EXISTED APPROXIMATELY 1.9 MILLION TO 150,000 YEARS AGO. FIRST FOUND ON THE ISLAND OF JAVA, IT WAS ORIGINALLY NAMED *PITHECANTHROPUS ERECTUS* UNDER THE *HOMO* GENUS. *HOMO* IS THE GENUS OF GREAT APES THAT INCLUDES MODERN HUMANS (*HOMO SAPIENS*) AND CLOSELY RELATED SPECIES. THIS CATEGORY DOES NOT ONLY INDICATE GENETIC AND STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES, BUT ALSO EVOLUTIONARY STEPS TOWARD CIVILIZATION.

THERE ARE SUBSPECIES THAT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN AFRICAN AND ASIAN POPULATIONS OF HOMO ERECTUS, BUT THE CLASSIFICATION IS STILL A MATTER OF SOME DEBATE. SOME SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THAT *HOMO ERGASTER* AND *HOMO ERECTUS* SHOULD BE CONSIDERED THE SAME SPECIES. THEIR SKULL CAVITIES WERE ABOUT 850-1150CC, WHICH IS FAIRLY CLOSE TO MODERN HUMANS. THEY WERE RELATIVELY TALL, WITH AVERAGE MALES STANDING ABOUT 5'10", WITH SLENDER BUILDS AND LONG LIMBS. THEY CREATED STONE TOOLS AND MAY HAVE USED RAFTS FOR SEA TRAVEL. EVIDENCE ALSO SUGGESTS THAT THEY MAY HAVE USED FIRE.

HOMO ERECTUS FOSSILS INDICATE AN IMPORTANT PHYSIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE FROM THEIR PREDECESSORS--BOTH TWO-LEGGED AND FOUR-LEGGED BODY MORPHOLOGIES EXISTED WITHIN THE SPECIES. IT IS A WIDELY ACCEPTED THEORY THAT THIS IS THE POINT IN EVOLUTIONARY HISTORY WHERE THE MODERN HUMAN RACES BEGAN TO DEVELOP. IT IS CONSIDERED LIKELY THAT *HOMO ERECTUS* WAS CAPABLE OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE. WITH THEIR USE OF TOOLS, LANGUAGE, AND THE COEXISTENCE OF BODY MORPHOLOGIES IN THE SAME SPECIES, *HOMO ERECTUS* GIVES US OUR FIRST GLIMPSES OF MODERN HUMANITY.




BRRRING

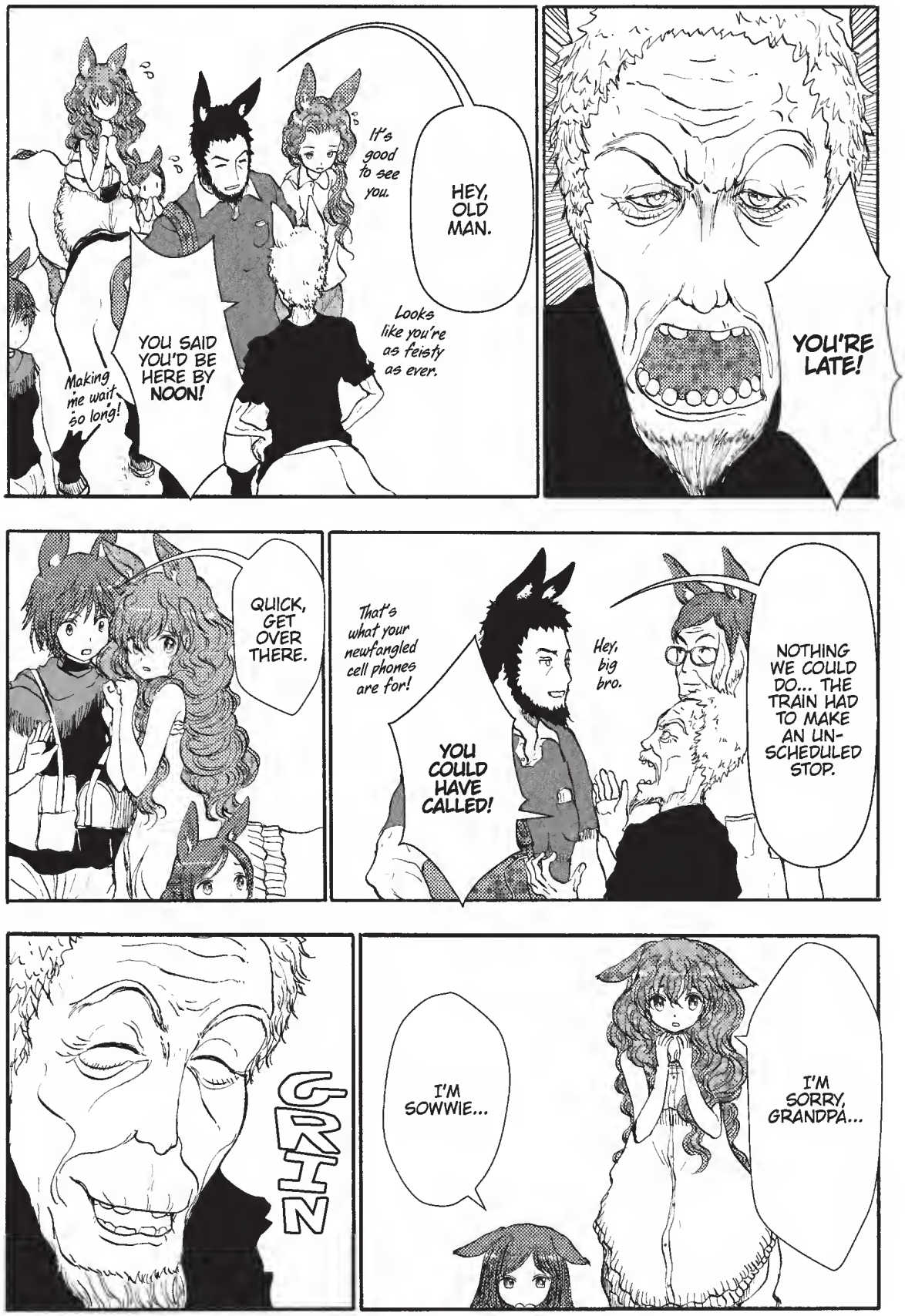

指定席
Reserved
This is us!

CHAPTER 18

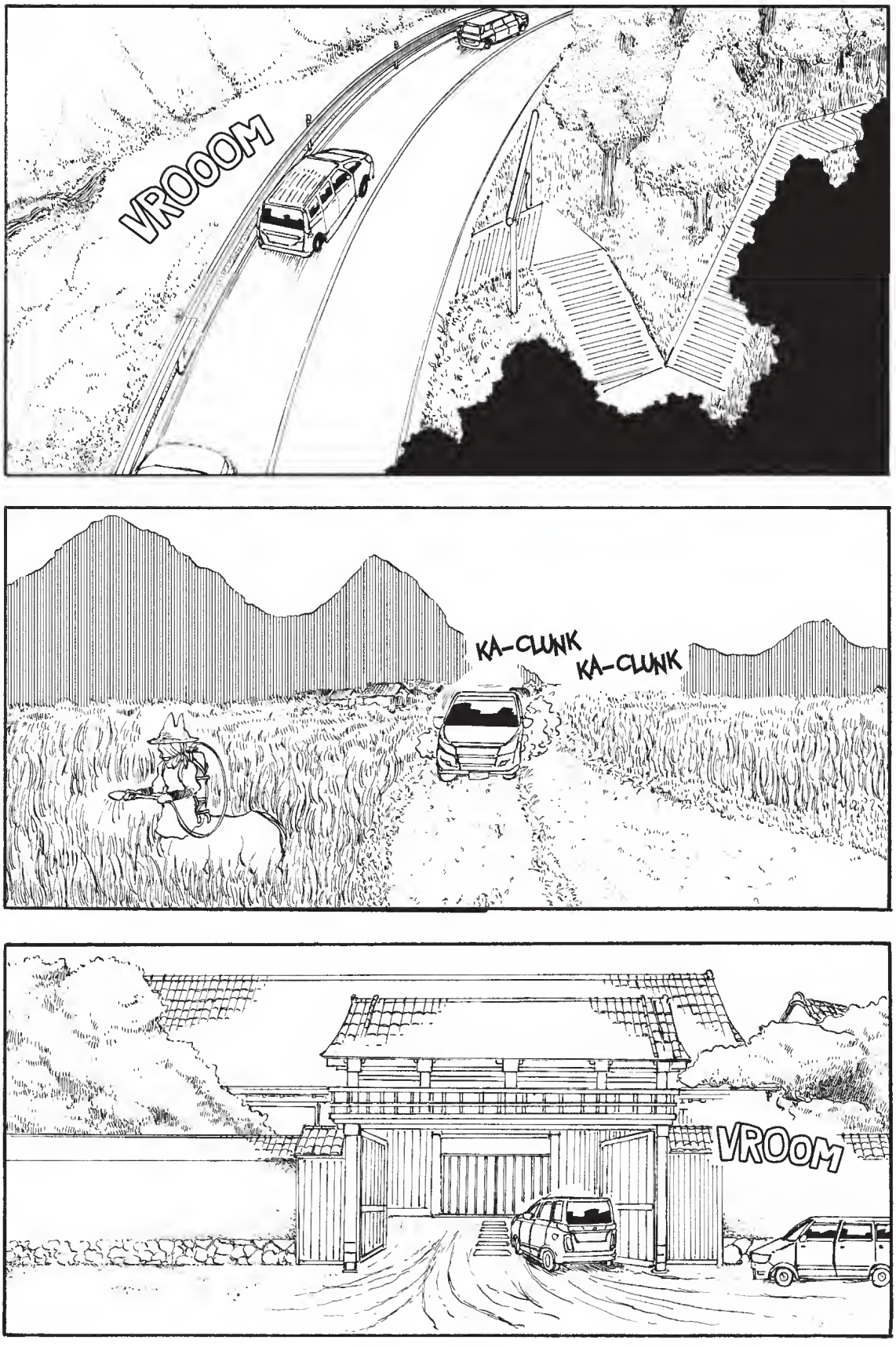
SIGH
It's so easy for me when Hime-chan is here!
RUMMAGE RUMMAGE
Here you go, princess.
He he he!
WELL, YOUR UNCLE THAT LIVES WITH HIM DOESN'T HAVE ANY CHILDREN.
Why?
GOING TO SEE YOUR GRAND-FATHER ON YOUR DAD'S SIDE IS ALWAYS STRESS-FUL.
WHAT'S WRONG, MAMA-SAN?
MUNCH MUNCH
OH, YOU'LL UNDER-STAND WHAT THAT MEANS IN TIME.
Beer so early?!
Why not?
BEER
BEER
AND GRANDPA REALLY LIKES YOU AND SHINO-CHAN.
BUT YOUR GRAND-FATHER OWNS A LOT OF LAND IN THE TOWN AND MOUNT-AINS...

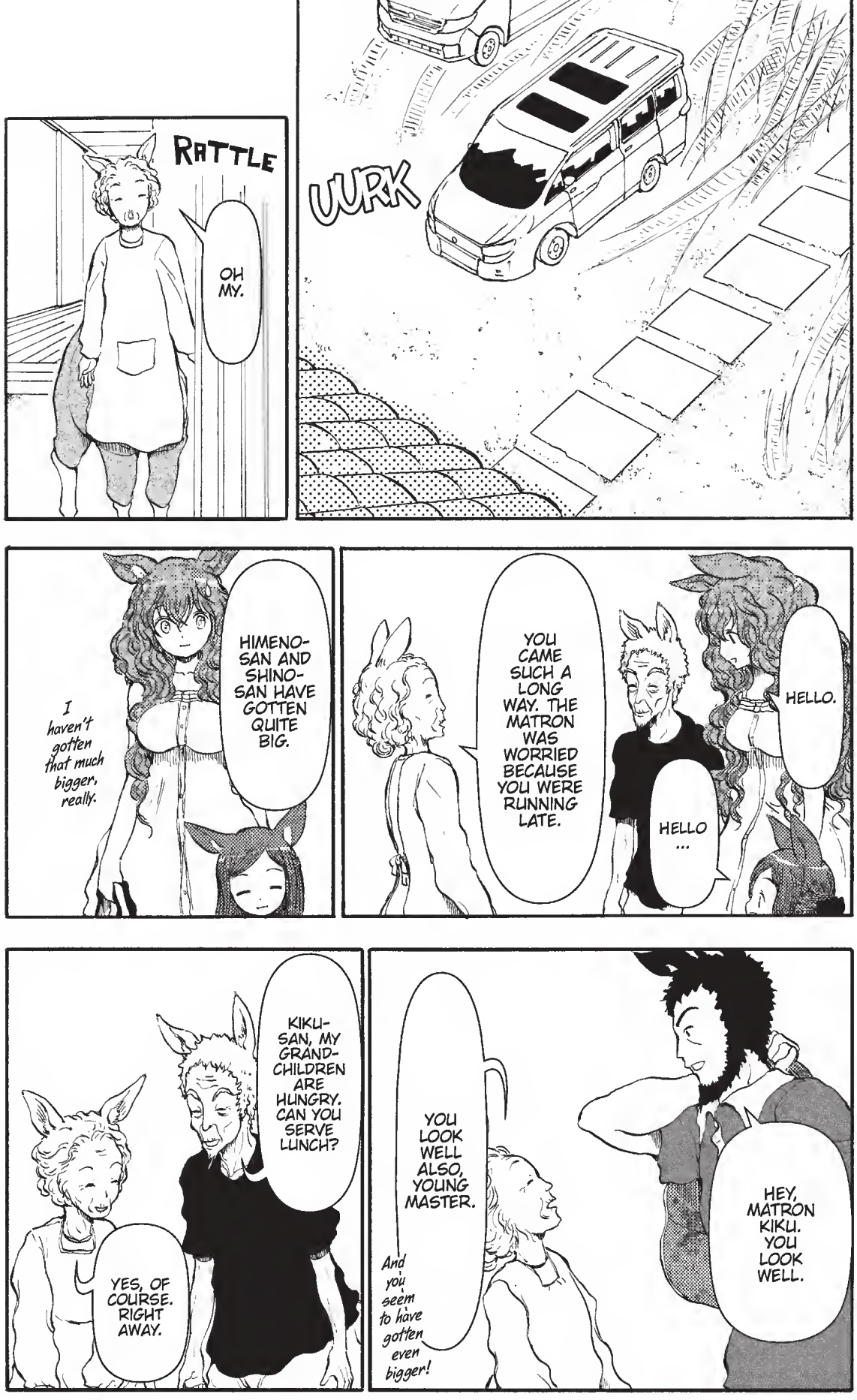
I'M GLAD THAT THEY'RE NOT OPENLY SCOWLING AT YOU, BUT...
They're very upper-class people.
AUNT AND UNCLE ARE ALWAYS SMILING, AND VERY KIND.
THEY'RE NOT COMPLETELY WITHOUT GREED.
Wanna play, trump?
DEALING WITH THEM STRESSES ME OUT.
Oh, let me play, too.
I THINK YOU'RE OVER-THINKING IT.
HOOOONK

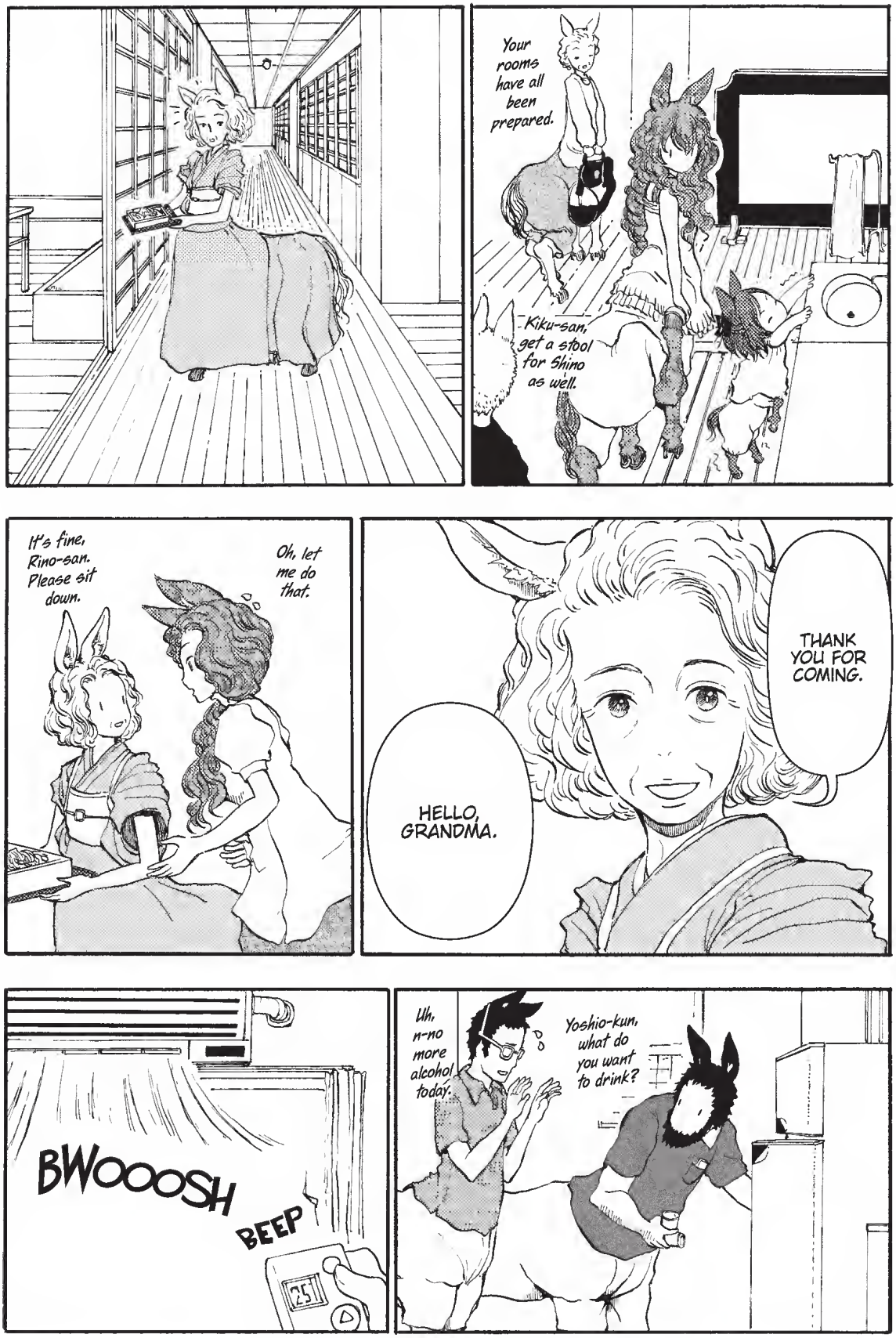
SCREECH
KA-CLUNE
KA-CLUNE
I get really nervous around your Dad.
The air tastes great!
Is that why you drank?
Shino-chan, are you sleepy?
I'm always surprised by how rural this place is.
Don't worry, we have Shino and Hime-chan.


HEY, OLD MAN.
It's good to see you.
Looks like you're as feisty as ever.
YOU SAID YOU'D BE HERE BY NOON!
Making me wait so long!
YOU'RE LATE!
QUICK, GET OVER THERE.
That's what your newfangled cell phones are for!
Hey, big bro.
YOU COULD HAVE CALLED!
NOTHING WE COULD DO... THE TRAIN HAD TO MAKE AN UN-SCHEDULED STOP.
URIN
I'M SOWWIE...
I'M SORRY, GRANDPA...

I'M SURE YOU'RE HUNGRY. GRANDMA'S WAITING FOR US. SHE HAS LUNCH READY!
OH, IT'S FINE.
Your parents should have called, though.
I'M HAPPY AS LONG AS HIME-CHAN AND SHINO-CHAN ARE SAFE.
FWEEEN
HIMENO AND SHINO CAN RIDE IN MY CAR.
I CAN'T WAIT! GRANDMA'S COOKING IS DELICIOUS!
I'm sure you would have preferred a taxi, but Grandfather insisted.
Thank you for driving.
Riding with my brothers-in-law.
Bro, did you get a new car?
You guys are with me.

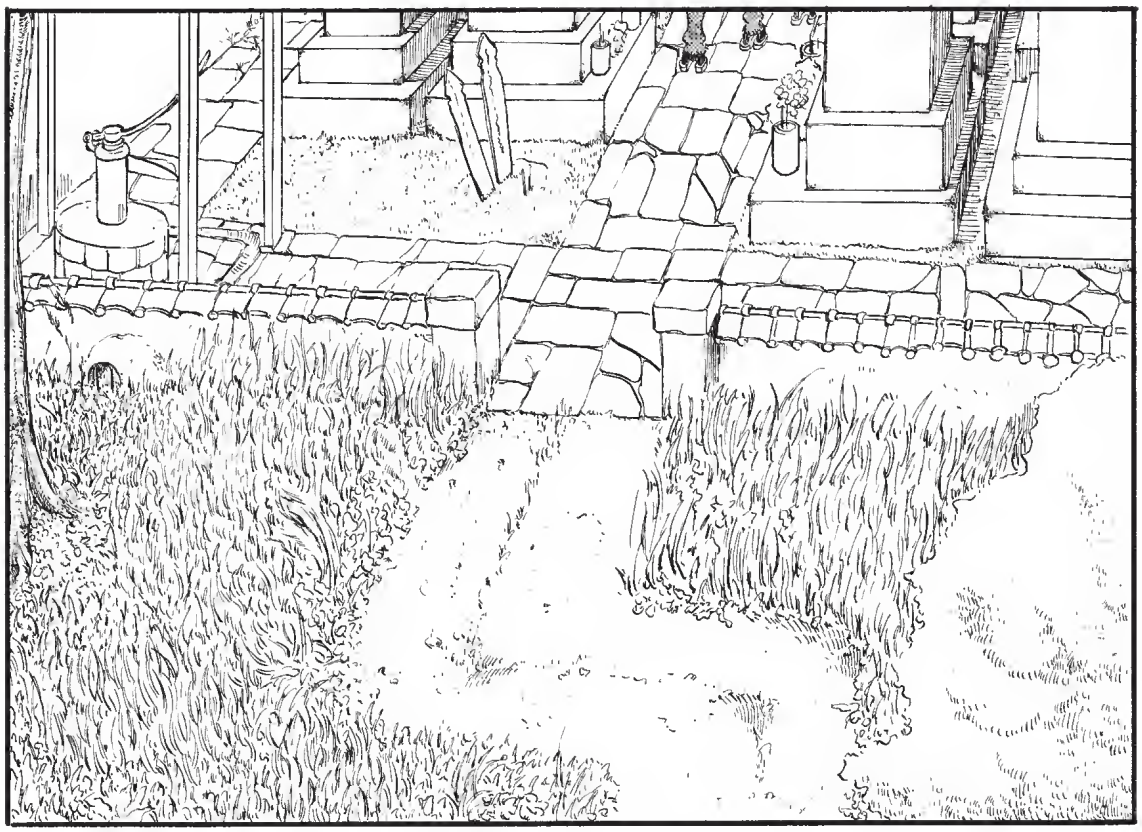

VROOOM
KA-CLUNK
KA-CLUNK
VROOM

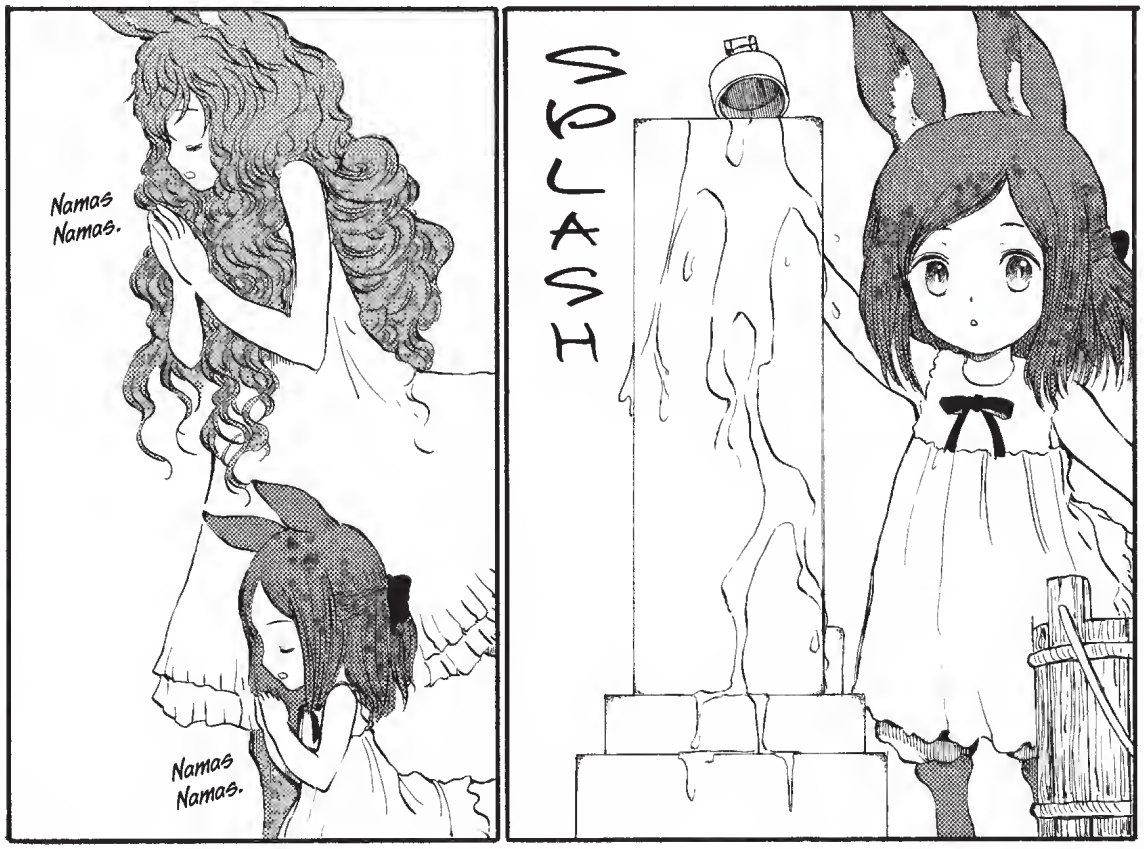

RATTLE
OH MY.
UURK
HIMENO-SAN AND SHINO-SAN HAVE GOTTEN QUITE BIG.
I haven't gotten that much bigger, really.
YOU CAME SUCH A LONG WAY. THE MATRON WAS WORRIED BECAUSE YOU WERE RUNNING LATE.
HELLO ...
HELLO.
KIKU-SAN, MY GRAND-CHILDREN ARE HUNGRY. CAN YOU SERVE LUNCH?
YES, OF COURSE. RIGHT AWAY.
YOU LOOK WELL ALSO, YOUNG MASTER.
And you seem to have gotten even bigger!
HEY, MATRON KIKU. YOU LOOK WELL.


Your rooms have all been prepared.
-Kiku-san, get a stool for Shino as well.
It's fine, Rino-san. Please sit down.
Oh, let me do that.
HELLO, GRANDMA.
THANK YOU FOR COMING.
BWOOOSH
BEEP
25.1
Uh, n-no more alcohol today.
Yoshio-kun, what do you want to drink?

OKAY, EVERYONE, LET'S EAT.

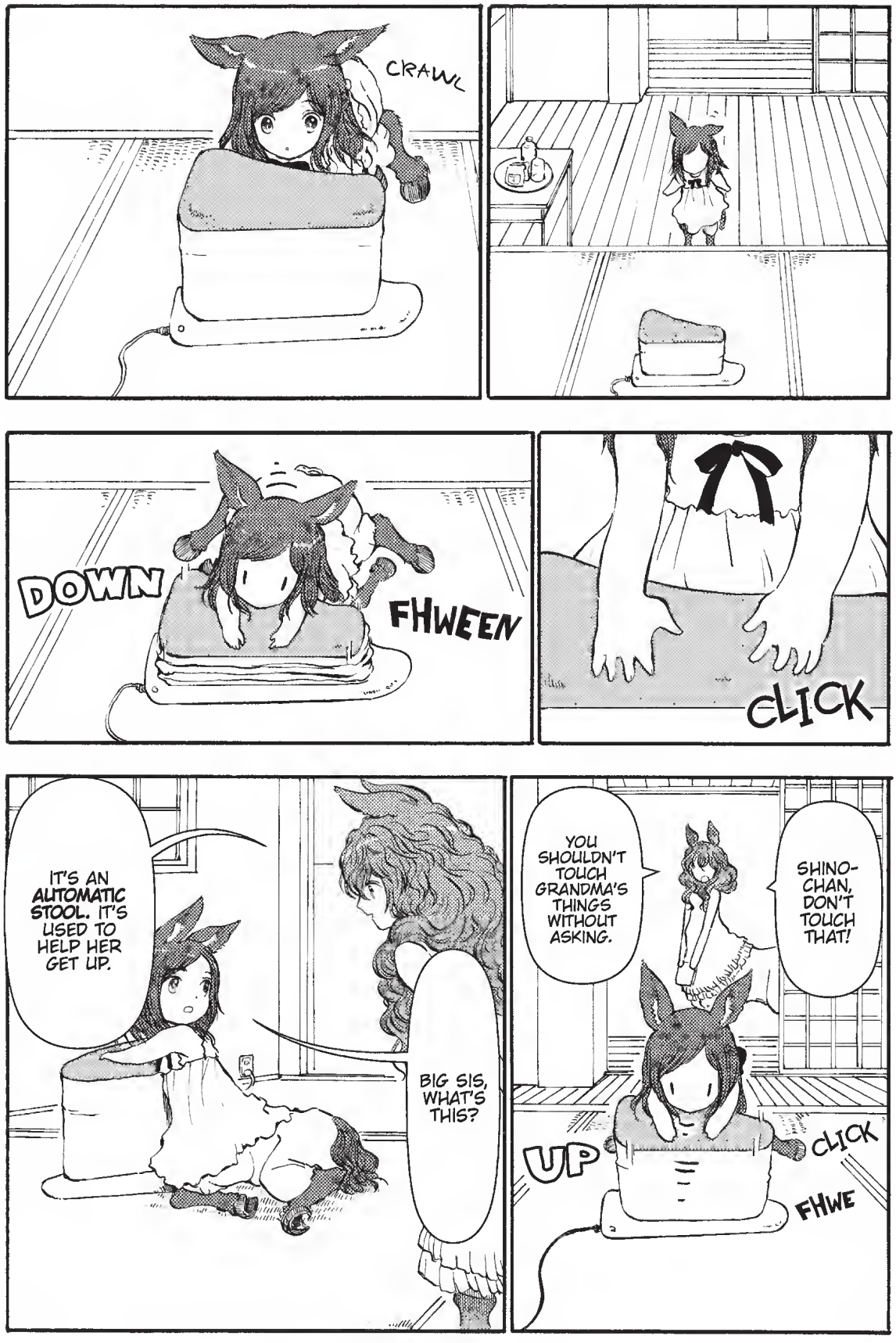
WE'RE HAVING AN EARLY DINNER, SO LUNCH IS A LITTLE LIGHT.
SHINO-CHAN, YOU'RE GOOD WITH CHOP-STICKS.
I'M A BIG SISTER AT SCHOOL NOW.
AFTER WE EAT, WE'LL TAKE A SHORT BREAK AND THEN VISIT THE FAMILY GRAVE.
I can't believe you don't go bankrupt eating that much. Rino-san sure must be great at managing finances.
BIG BROTHER, ARE YOU *TRYING* TO GET EVEN BIGGER?

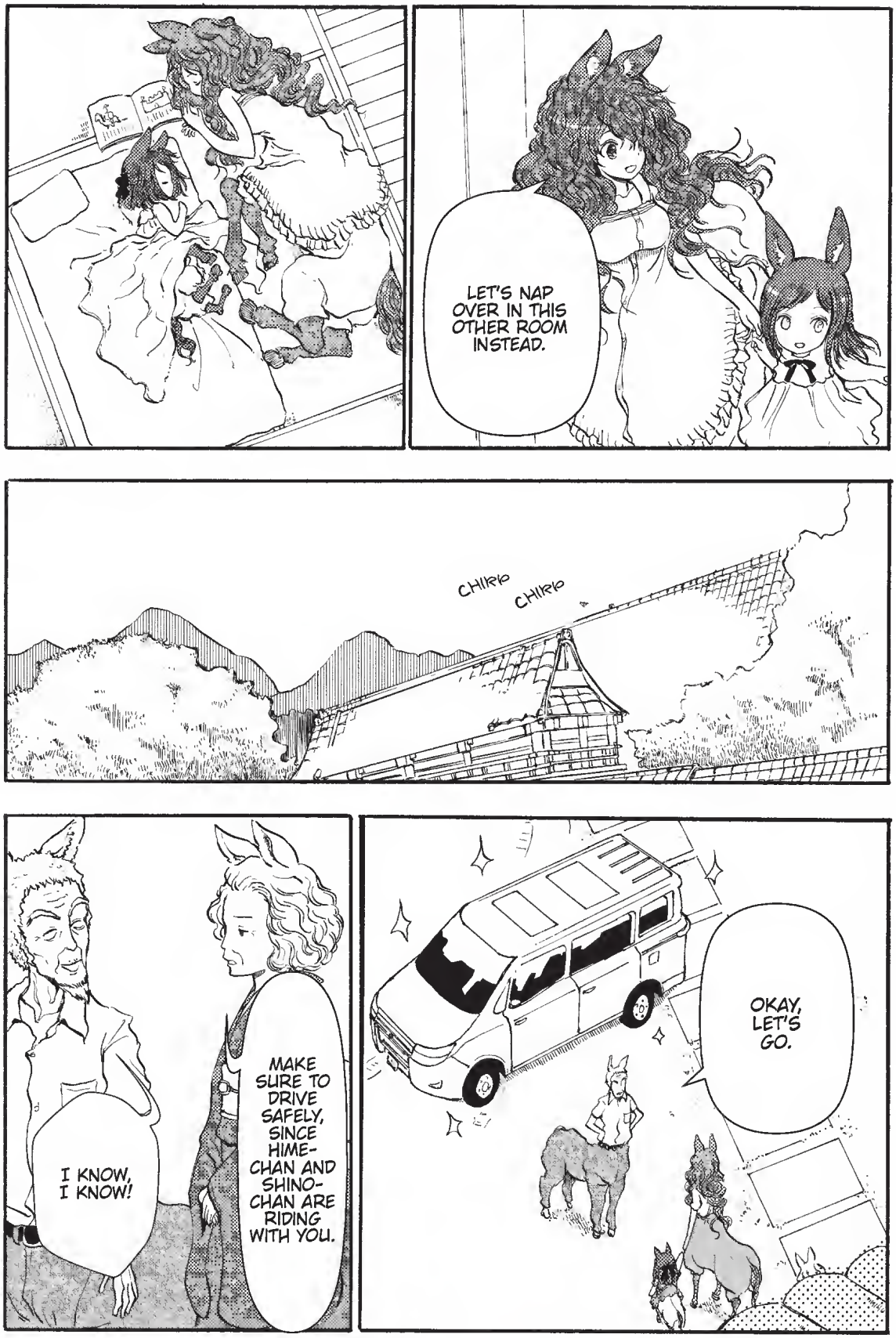



Namas
Namas.
Namas
Namas.
SPLASH

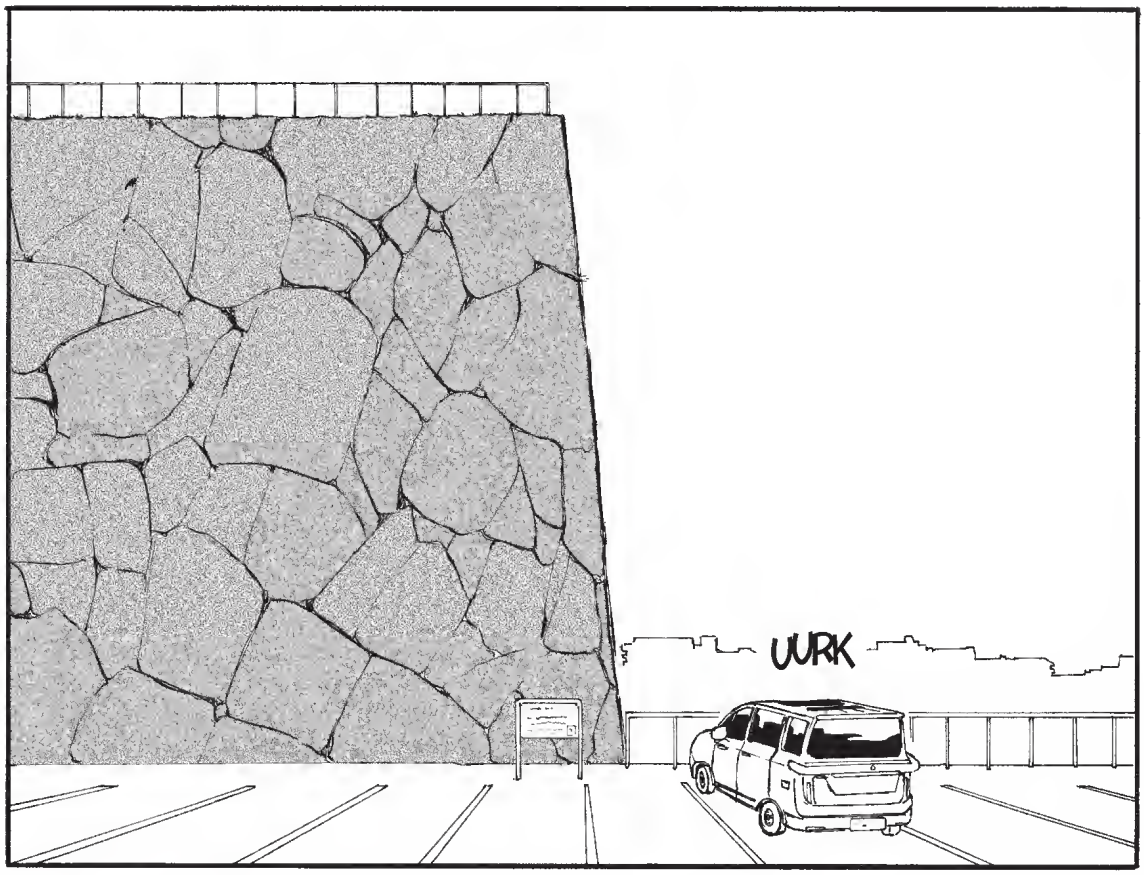
MOM! DON'T TALK LIKE THAT!
OH, BUT IT'S TRUE.
HUH?
Leave it to me!
GRANDMA WILL JOIN EVERYONE HERE SOON, SO TAKE GOOD CARE OF ME THEN.
'LEAST NOT UNTIL I SEE HIMENO AND SHINO AS BRIDES.
So, at least twenty more years of your nagging, dear?
Brides?
OLD MAN...
I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE SOON.
I LOVE CAKE!
THERE'S A NEW SHOP THAT SERVES DELICIOUS CAKE. DO YOU LIKE CAKE, SHINO-CHAN?
AGAIN?
THAT'S RIGHT. LET'S GO TO TOWN TOMORROW.

A CASTLE?!
THERE'S A CASTLE IN TOWN, TOO.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I KNOW.
HIME-CHAN...
Yep, a trip into town. I have to wash the car when we get back.
Excuse me, I have to prepare dinner.
It looks different from the picture books, though.
But it's a castle!
AH, WELCOME HOME.
THA-THUMP
Please sit and rest, young wives.
BEFORE YOU LEFT HOME, I WORRIED THAT YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING WIFELY.
OH, ARE YOU ALL GOING TO HELP?


CRAWL
DOWN
FHWEEN
CLICK
IT'S AN AUTOMATIC STOOL. IT'S USED TO HELP HER GET UP.
BIG SIS, WHAT'S THIS?
YOU SHOULDN'T TOUCH GRANDMA'S THINGS WITHOUT ASKING.
SHINO-CHAN, DON'T TOUCH THAT!
UP
CLICK
FHWE

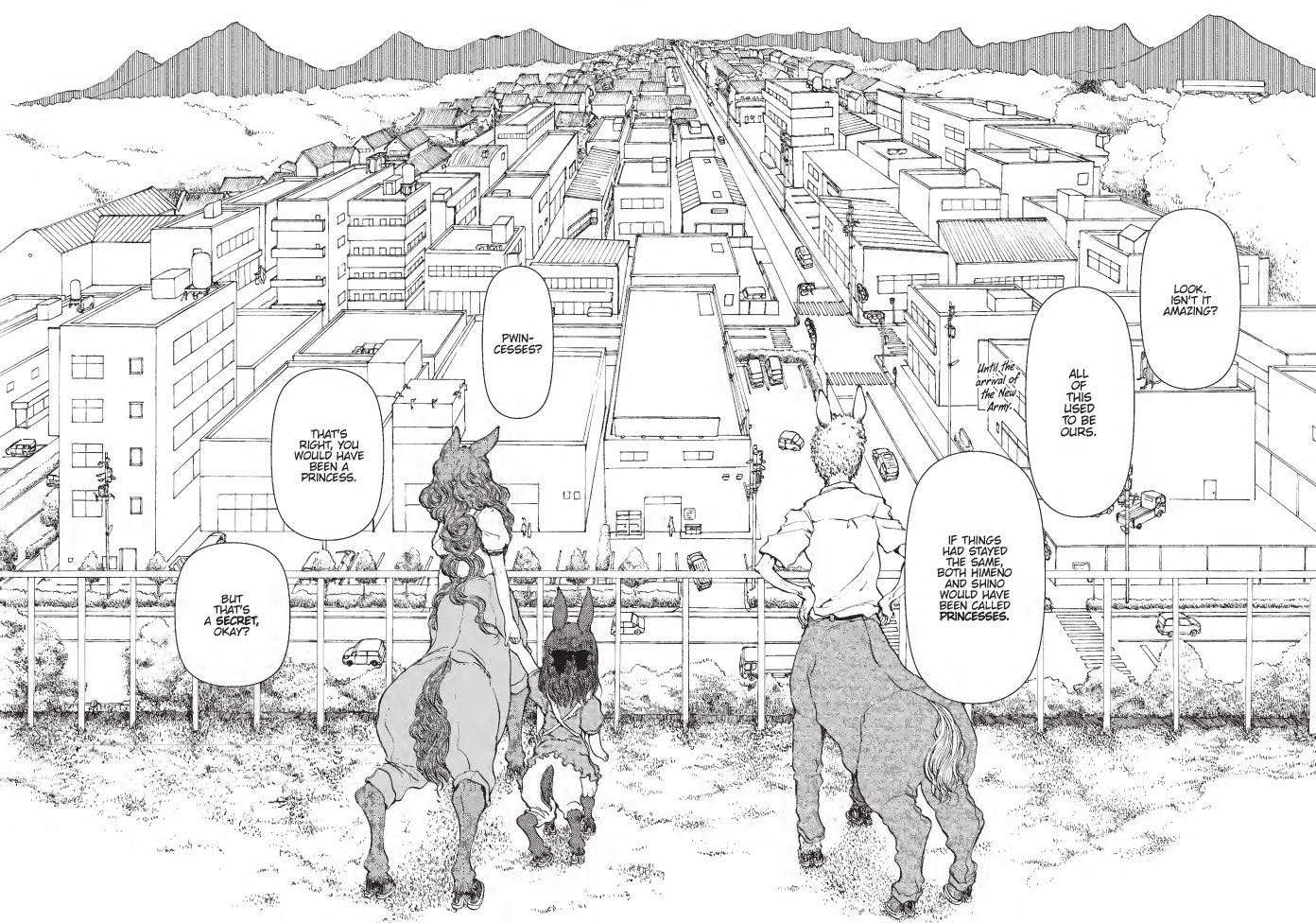

LET'S NAP OVER IN THIS OTHER ROOM INSTEAD.
CHIRP CHIRP
MAKE SURE TO DRIVE SAFELY, SINCE HIME-CHAN AND SHINO-CHAN ARE RIDING WITH YOU.
I KNOW, I KNOW!
OKAY, LET'S GO.

VROOM
IT'S STARTING TO LOOK LIKE WHERE WE LIVE.
ER New Democratic Station
LOOKS LIKE A HIGH SPEED RAILWAY WILL BE BUILT NEAR US SOON, TOO.
THERE IS A REPRE-SENTATIVE NAMED NANIGASHI WHO ORIGINALLY GREW UP HERE.

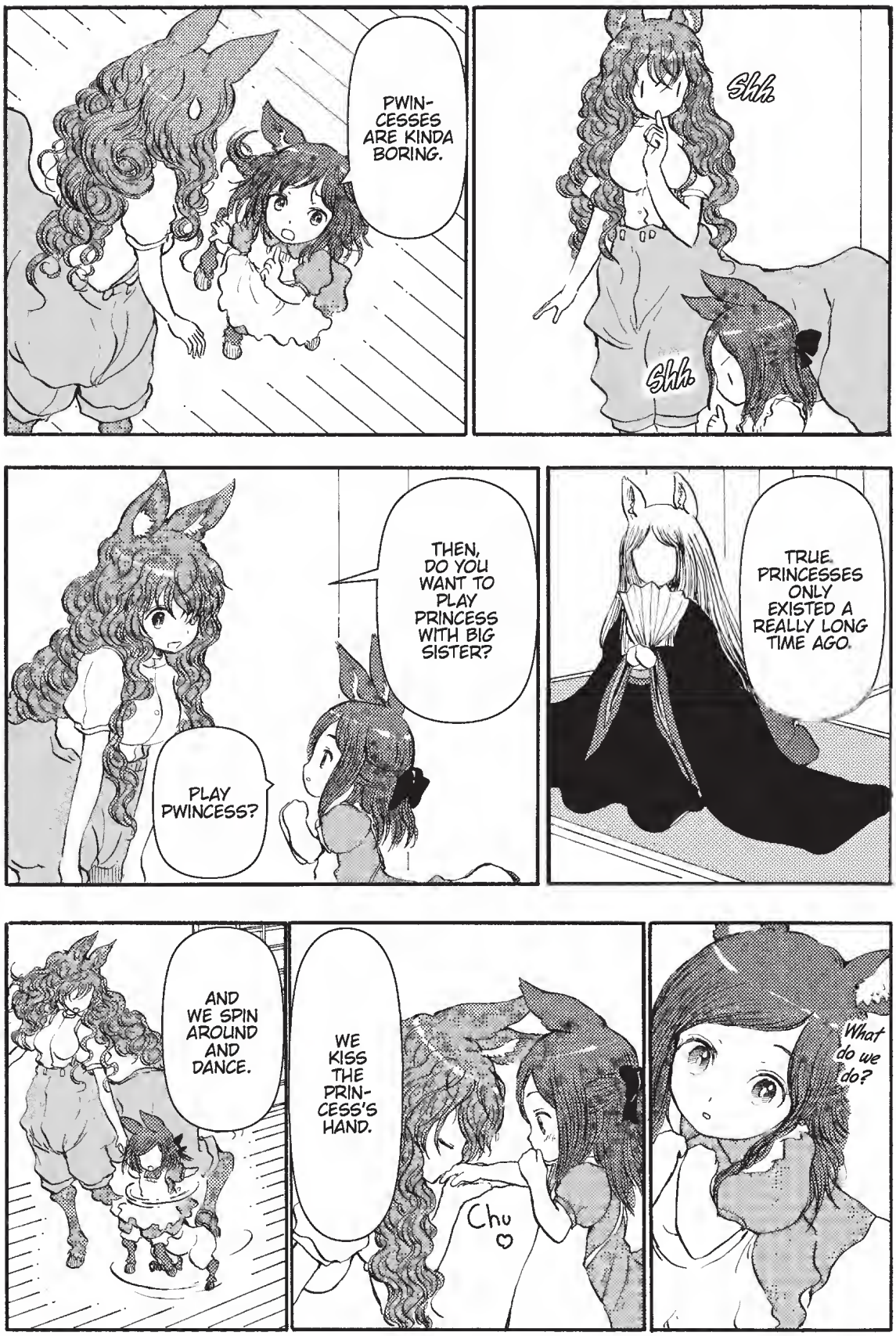

UURK

C'MON, GIRLS! LET'S CLIMB TO THE TOP!

CASTLE...?
WHAT'S LEFT OF IT.
The upper part burned down.


LOOK. ISN'T IT AMAZING?
ALL OF THIS USED TO BE OURS.
Until the arrival of the New Army.
IF THINGS HAD STAYED THE SAME, BOTH HIMENO AND SHINO WOULD HAVE BEEN CALLED PRINCESSES.
PWIN-CESSES?
THAT'S RIGHT, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN A PRINCESS.
BUT THAT'S A SECRET, OKAY?

WELCOME HOME!
UM, MOM?
SHINO IS ACTU-ALLY A PWINCESS.
SHINO-CHAN, THAT'S A SECRET, REMEMBER?
Well, it's fine for me to know.
YOU CAN'T TELL PEOPLE OUTSIDE OUR FAMILY.
SHH.


PWIN-CESSES ARE KINDA BORING.
Shh.
Shh.
THEN, DO YOU WANT TO PLAY PRINCESS WITH BIG SISTER?
PLAY PWINCESS?
TRUE. PRINCESSES ONLY EXISTED A REALLY LONG TIME AGO.
AND WE SPIN AROUND AND DANCE.
WE KISS THE PRIN-CESS'S HAND.
Chu ♡
What do we do?

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, MOM.
YEAH, BUT SCHOOL IS STARTING SOON...
YOU SHOULD STAY LONGER.
HOOOONK
Here you go, Pwincess.
Chuo
PLAYING PRINCESS?
CHILDREN REALLY DO THINK UP THE MOST CREATIVE THINGS.
Pyo Pyo
PLOP
MAKI-CHAN IS THE PWINCESS NEXT.

A CentaUr's Life

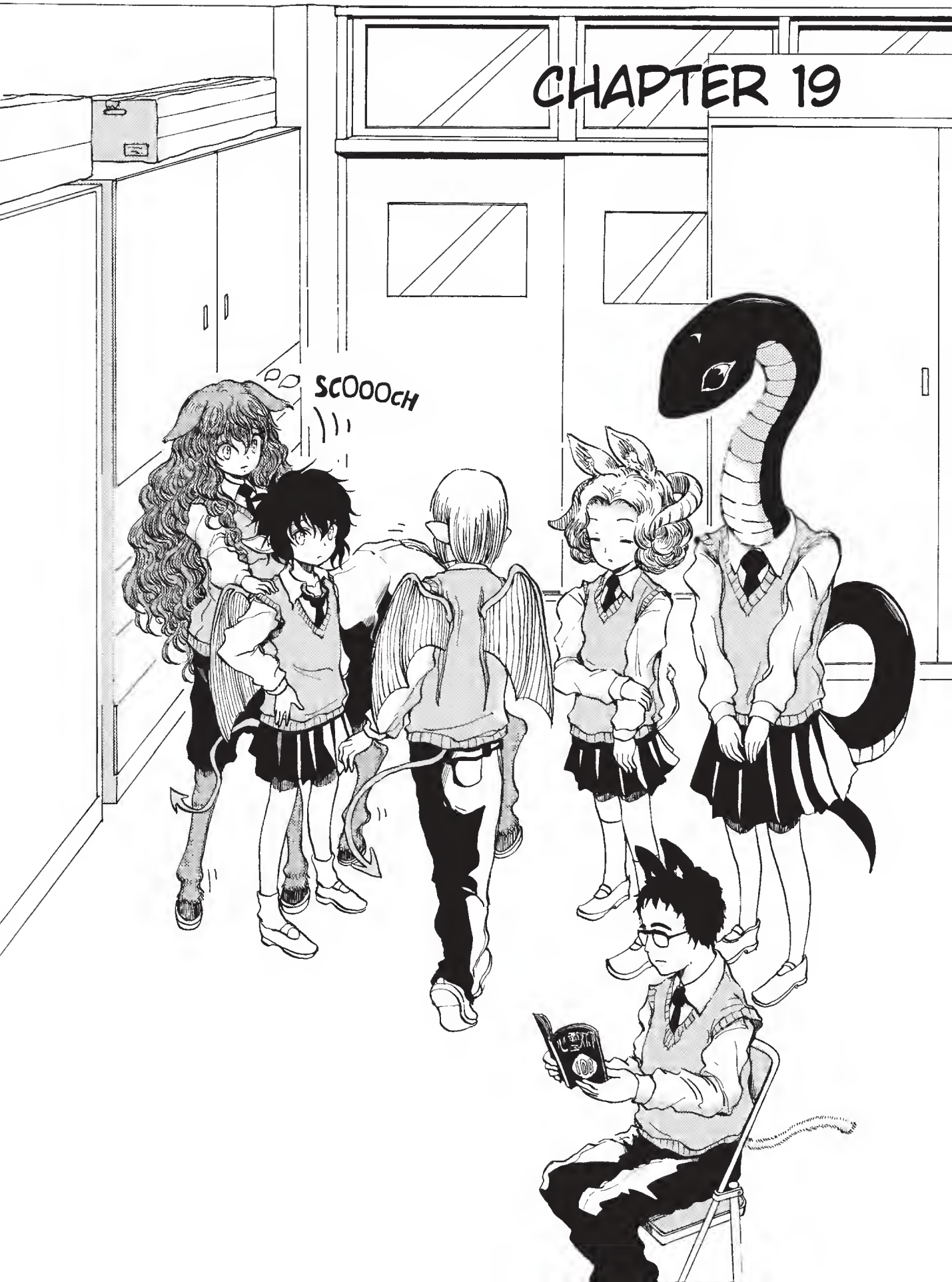
EXPLORING HUMAN ANCESTRY: NEANDERTHALS

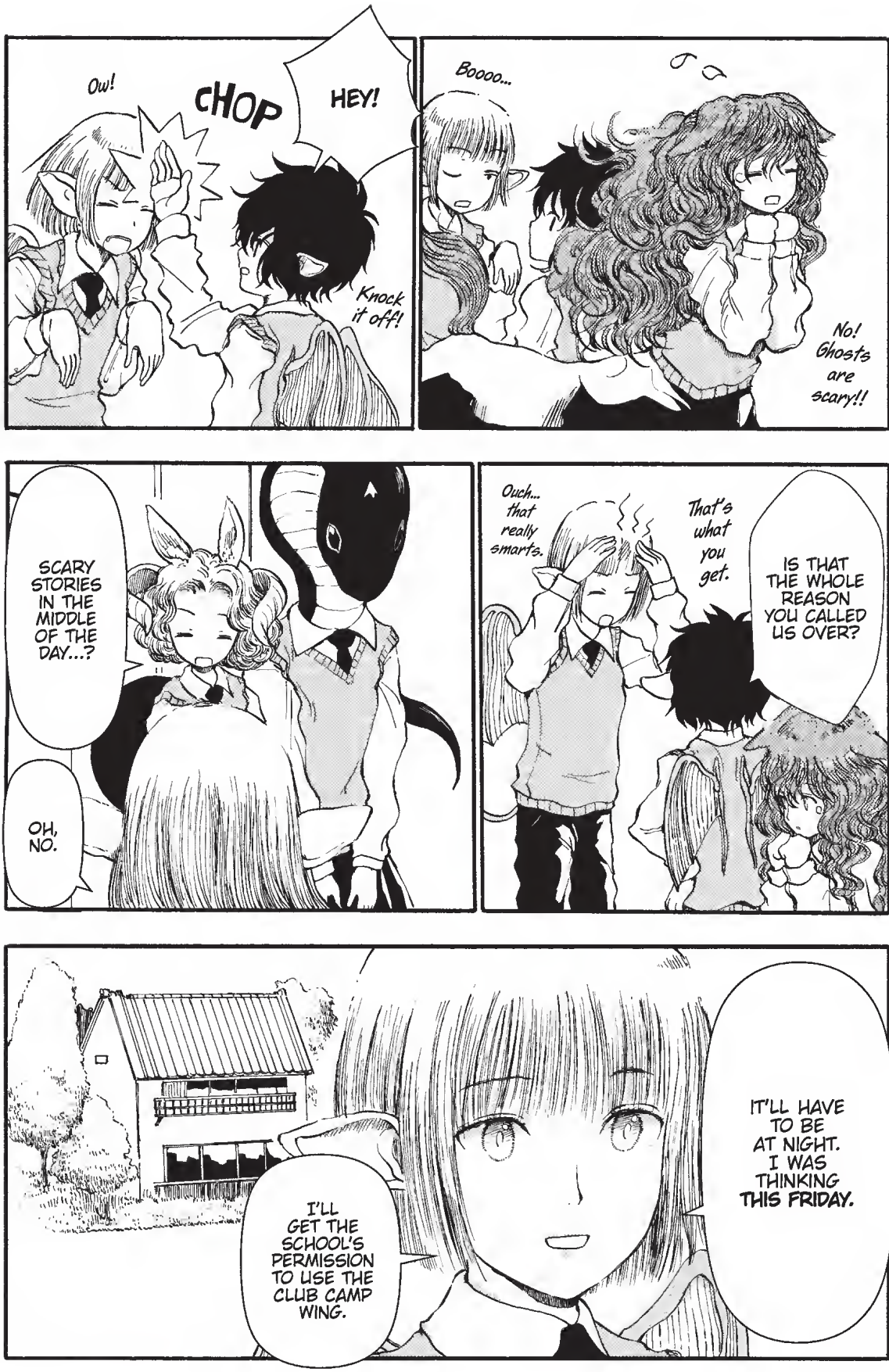
THEIR OFFICIAL NAME IS *HOMO NEANDERTHALENSIS*, THOUGH SOME ARGUE THAT THEY WERE A SUBSPECIES OF *HOMO SAPIENS (HOMO SAPIENS NEANDERTHALENSIS)*. THEY EXISTED FROM ROUGHLY 600,000 TO 30,000 YEARS AGO. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE CONTROVERSY AS TO WHETHER NEANDERTHALS INTERBRED WITH MODERN HUMANS.

THEIR AVERAGE SKULL CAPACITY WAS 1600CC, WHICH IS LARGER THAN THE AVERAGE MODERN HUMAN. THEY WERE SLIGHTLY SHORTER, THE AVERAGE MALE STANDING ABOUT 5'5" TALL, BUT THEY WERE VERY STURDILY BUILT. THEY HAD POWERFUL JAWS AND PROMINENT BROWS. COMPARED TO MODERN HUMANS, NEANDERTHAL FACES SLOPED FORWARD. EARLY ARTISTIC RECONSTRUCTIONS OF NEANDERTHALS DEPICTED THEM AS HAIRY AND APE-LIKE, WHICH HAS UNFORTUNATELY BEEN CARRIED THROUGH INTO POPULAR CULTURE. MODERN RECONSTRUCTIONS BASED ON MORE CURRENT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH DEPICT NEANDERTHAL TO LOOK MUCH MORE LIKE MODERN HUMANS. NEANDERTHALS MADE TOOLS, DRESSED THEMSELVES IN LEATHER AND FUR, LIVED IN COMPLEX SOCIAL GROUPS, CREATED WORKS OF ART, AND PROBABLY COMMUNICATED WITH A SPOKEN LANGUAGE. EVIDENCE ALSO SUGGESTS THAT THEY PRACTICED RITUAL BURIAL OF THEIR DEAD.

ARGUABLY, THE LARGEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEANDERTHAL AND MODERN HUMANS LIES IN BODY MORPHOLOGY. ALTHOUGH MANY NEANDERTHAL FOSSIL SPECIMENS HAVE BEEN FOUND, ALL OF THEM ARE OF THE ANGELFOLK MORPHOLOGY. THE LEADING HYPOTHESIS IS THAT ONLY ANGELFOLK WITH THEIR PROTECTIVE WINGS WERE ABLE TO SURVIVE THE EXTREMELY COLD WINTERS. RESEARCHERS POINT TO MODERN POPULATIONS OF INUIT AND SIMILAR GROUPS LIVING EXCLUSIVELY IN COLD CLIMATES, ALMOST ALL OF WHOM ARE ANGELFOLK. NEANDERTHALS SEEM TO HAVE GONE EXTINCT APPROXIMATELY 30,000 YEARS AGO. SOME THEORIZE THAT THIS WAS DUE TO THE LIMITATIONS OF THEIR SINGLE BODY MORPHOLOGY.

I THINK OUR NEXT EVENT SHOULD FOCUS ON SCARY STORIES.
YOU MEAN... WITH GHOSTS AND MONSTERS AND STUFF?
YUP!


CHAPTER 19
SCOOOCH

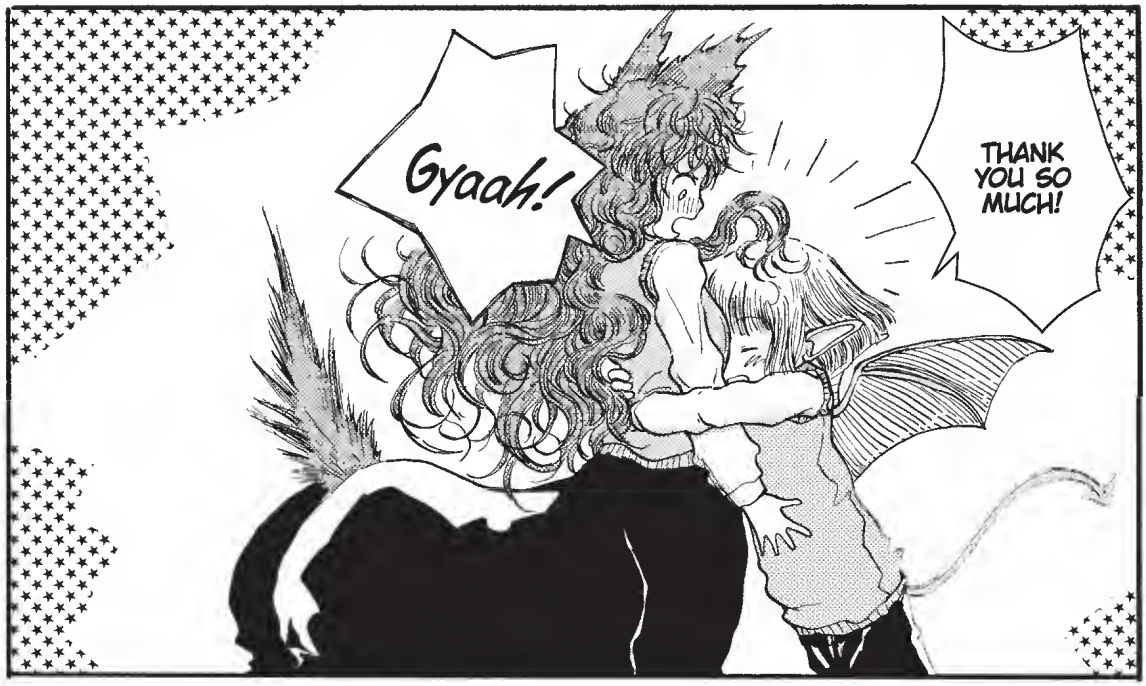

Ow!
CHOP
HEY!
Knock it off!
Boooo...
No! Ghosts are scary!!
SCARY STORIES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY...?
OH, NO.
Ouch... that really smarts.
That's what you get.
IS THAT THE WHOLE REASON YOU CALLED US OVER?
I'LL GET THE SCHOOL'S PERMISSION TO USE THE CLUB CAMP WING.
IT'LL HAVE TO BE AT NIGHT. I WAS THINKING THIS FRIDAY.

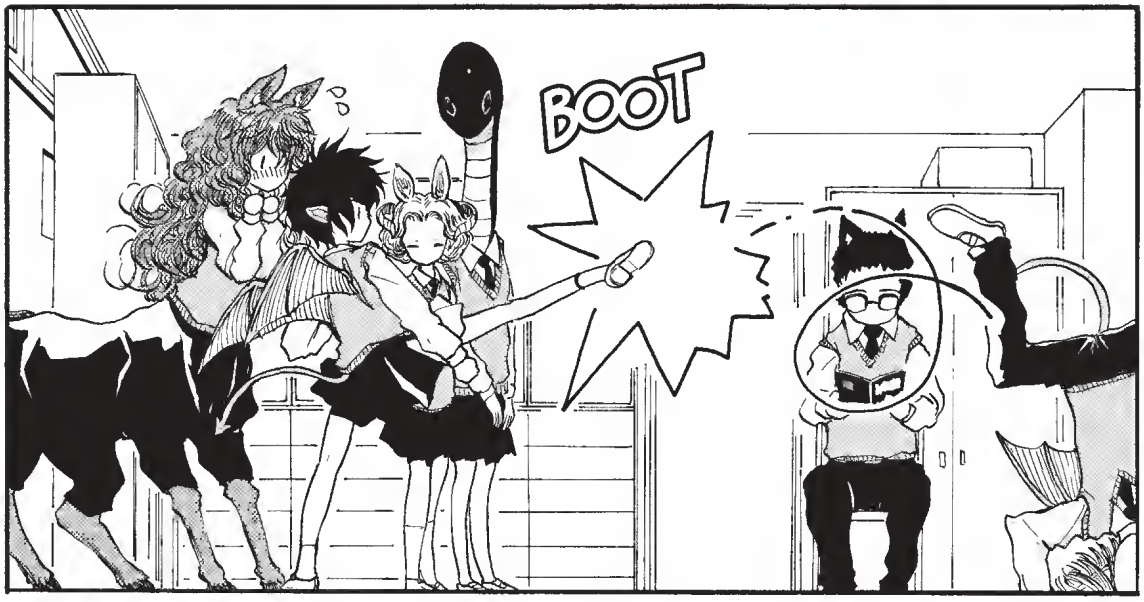
HANG ON.
Wait, you're serious?
A SLEEP-OVER?
I FIGURED WE'D BE DONE BY 10 PM.
We can adjust the schedule, though.
THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT!
SNAP
CAN WE DECIDE THIS WITHOUT SHORTY-SENPAI?
ARE WE?
I DON'T THINK SO.
YOU GUYS ARE PRETTY BOLD, FOR UNDER-CLASSMEN, RIGHT?

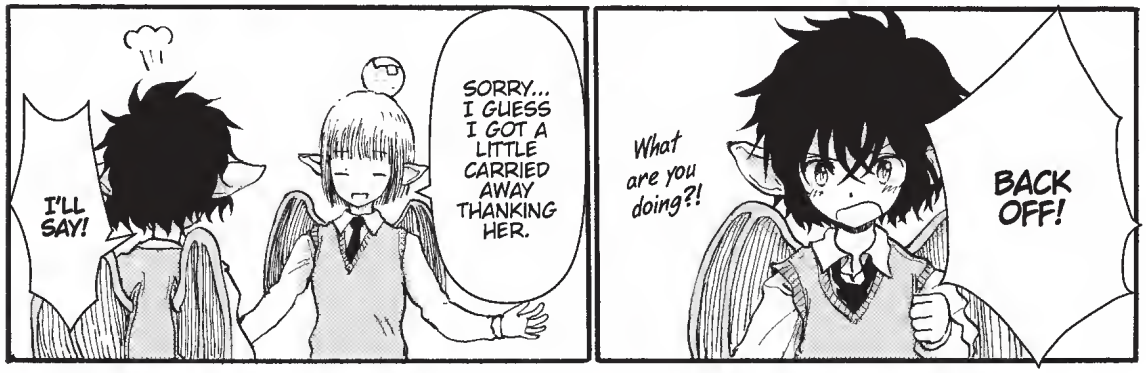
IF YOU WANNA DO THIS SO BAD...
YACHIYODA TOWAKO'S PRESIDENT OF THE OCCULT/ SCIENCE CLUB, FYI.
I WANTED TO MAKE SURE ALL OF YOU WOULD COME BEFORE INVITING, TOWAKO-CHAN.
IT'S MEANING-LESS IF TOWAKO-CHAN ISN'T THERE!
JUST DO IT WITH MR. HAUNTED HOUSE OVER THERE.
The Antiquities Guide
He came right out and said it.
YUP. THAT'S HOW IT IS.
OOH, I SEE. SO THAT'S HOW IT IS.

BUT SHE HATES BEING LEFT OUT, SO SHE'LL COME IF ALL OF YOU WILL BE THERE.
I GUESS I'LL GO TOO.
IF IT'S JUST TWO GUYS, SHE DEFINITELY WON'T COME.
You're just using us as bait.
CLOSER AS A CLUB, HUH?
AND WE'D ALSO GET CLOSER AS A CLUB! TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE!
AND IF WE TURN THAT IN AS OUR CLUB RESULTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR...
Shin Kanata High Sch
The Occult/Science C
Paranormal Case F
20xx
IT'S LEGIT! WE'LL EVEN COLLECT THE STORIES INTO A BOOKLET.

Hmm.
HE ASSUMES WE'LL WANT TO STAY IN THE CLUB.
WELL, IT IS NICE TO HAVE A PLACE WE CAN HANG OUT.
THEN WE'LL BE ABLE TO GET THE ROOM AND BUDGET FOR NEXT YEAR AS WELL. THREE BIRDS WITH ONE STONE!
WHAT?
I THINK WE SHOULD DO IT.
BUT THEN I'D HAVE TO TEACH THE KIDS' KARATE CLASS, SHOWER, AND COME BACK TO SCHOOL.
KIMI-HARA-KUN!
I DUNNO... IT JUST SEEMS KINDA SWEET.


Gyaah!
THANK YOU SO MUCH!


BOOT


I'LL SAY!
SORRY... I GUESS I GOT A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY THANKING HER.
What are you doing?!
BACK OFF!

Your face is too close!
STEP STEP STEP
I JUST WANT TO SHOW MY APPRECIATION, IS ALL! HERE, I'LL HUG YOU, TOO!
YOU'RE GONNA SEXUALLY HARASS ME, TOO?!
IF YOU LIKE HER, WHY DON'T YOU JUST ASK HER OUT?
I believe you! Go away!
Thank you! I mean it!
SENPAI, I HAVE A QUESTION.
And then, the evil spirit...
LET'S SHARE SCARY STORIES TOGETHER!
NO!
IF I THOUGHT SHE'D SAY YES, I WOULDN'T NEED YOU GUYS!

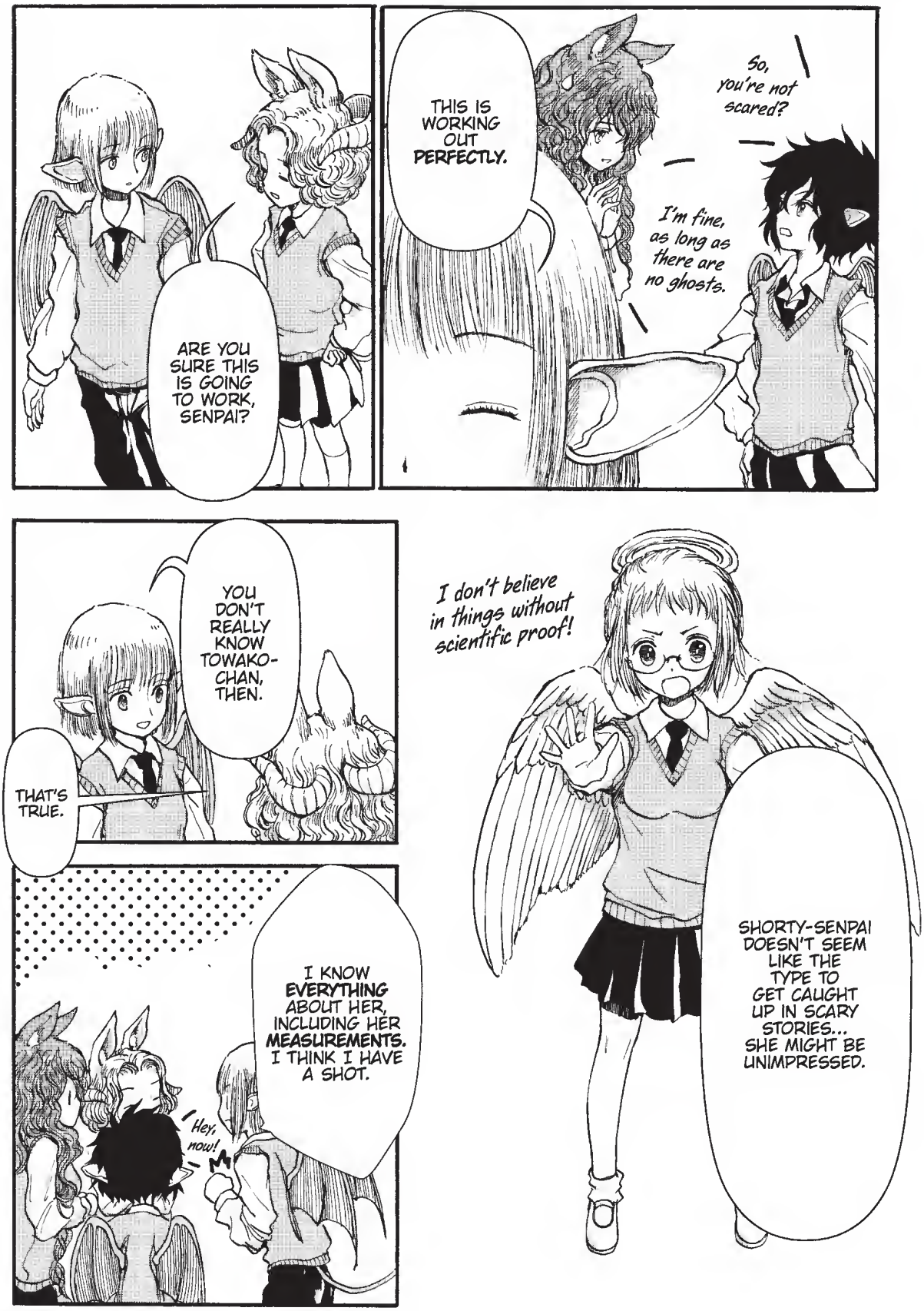
I don't think that would be good either.
A horror movie would be better.
WELL... WE COULD LOOK FOR POWER SPOTS, OR HUNT UFOS...
HOW ABOUT SOMETHING BESIDES SCARY STORIES?
YES!
But don't hug me!
WILL YOU HELP ME?!
UM, SO YOU JUST WANT TO GET CLOSER TO THE CLUB PRESIDENT, RIGHT?
YES.
I'LL... TRY MY BEST.
SCARY STORIES... YOU GONNA BE OKAY?

WE CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE SUCH THINGS.
WE DON'T BELIEVE IN SPIRITS OR SUPER-NATURAL PHENOM-ENON.
THERE ARE NONE.
ARE THERE ANY SCARY STORIES IN ANTARCTICA?
But they're still scary-!
We don't really believe them either.
PLEASE DON'T THINK I AM DENYING YOUR BELIEFS!
AH--!
BUT SPEAKING OF STRANGE THINGS...

AS A CHILD, I ONLY WALKED ALONG THE CRACKS OF THE STONE STREETS.
I won't fall!
WHEN ASKED WHY I DID SO...
IN OTHER WORDS...
BUT NOW, OF COURSE, I KNOW NOW THAT THERE WAS NO WAY FOR A STONE TO FALL.

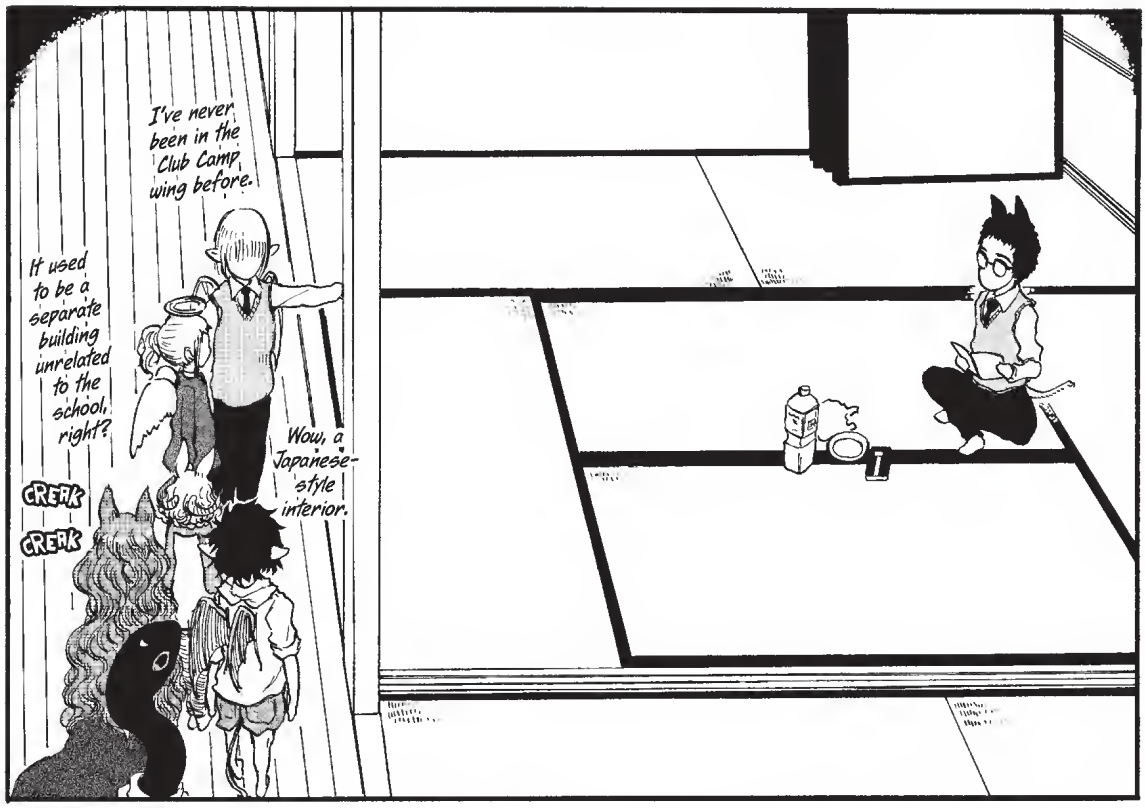
ANTARCTIC PEOPLE HAVE THE CAPACITY FOR SUPERSTITION...
BUT THEIR ULTRA-LOGICAL CULTURE MAKES SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS IRRATIONAL.
THIS IS QUITE AMAZING. IT WAS DEFINITELY WORTH COMING TO VISIT HUMAN SOCIETY.
Well, I could be wrong.
SO YOU'LL ALL HELP ME OUT, RIGHT?

YES! I'M SO HAPPY!!
IF HIME SAYS SHE'S GOING...
I DON'T REALLY CARE, BUT...
AS LONG AS EVERYONE ELSE IS.
DEFINITELY. IT'S AN EXCELLENT CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE YOUR CULTURE.
WELL... EXCEPT YOU.
EACH?!
OKAY, EVERYONE PREPARE AT LEAST TEN SCARY STORIES.
I'M KIND OF EXCITED ABOUT THOSE STORIES.
THERE ARE NO GHOSTS OR MONSTERS, BUT I DO HAVE A FEW ILLOGICAL STORIES.

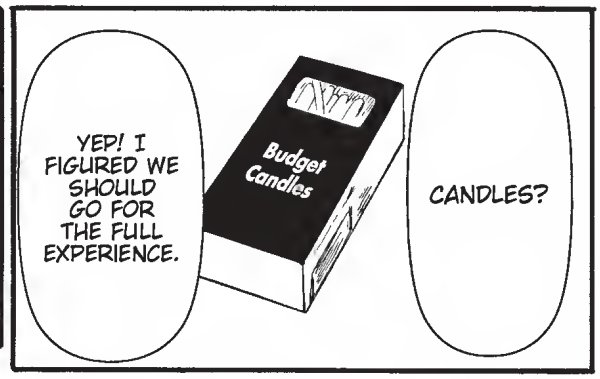

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS GOING TO WORK, SENPAI?
THIS IS WORKING OUT PERFECTLY.
So, you're not scared?
I'm fine, as long as there are no ghosts.
YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW TOWAKO-CHAN, THEN.
THAT'S TRUE.
I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT HER, INCLUDING HER MEASUREMENTS. I THINK I HAVE A SHOT.
Hey, now!
I don't believe in things without scientific proof!
SHORTY-SENPAI DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THE TYPE TO GET CAUGHT UP IN SCARY STORIES... SHE MIGHT BE UNIMPRESSED.

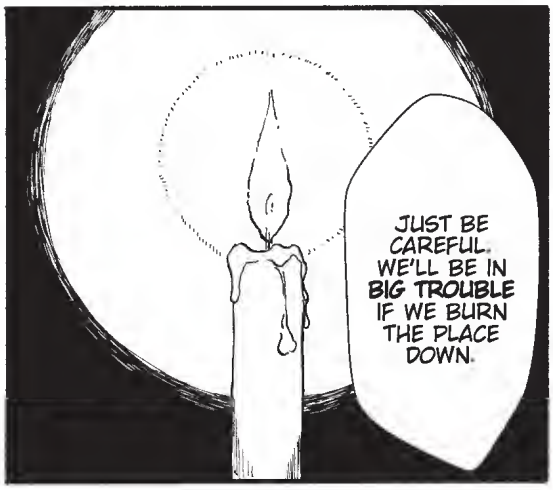
DU-DUN
THE SCHOOL IS SUPER CREEPY AT NIGHT.
TOTALLY.
OH? I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE IN GHOSTS.
IT DOESN'T NEED GHOSTS TO BE SCARY.

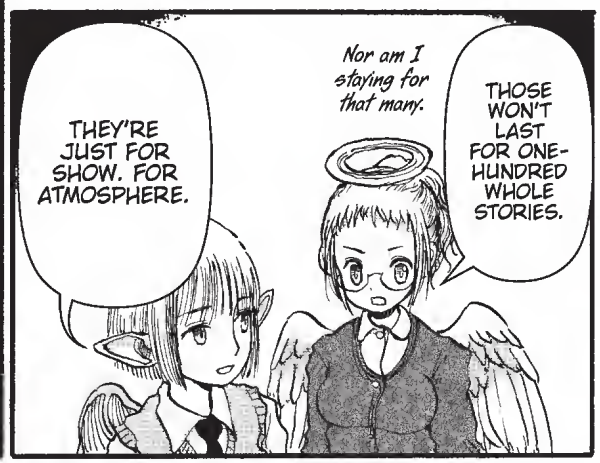
WASN'T THIS PLACE A GRAVEYARD BEFORE THE SCHOOL WAS BUILT?
Eek!
JUST KIDDING. IT WAS JUST AN OPEN FIELD.
GAH! DON'T DO THAT TO ME!
THERE ARE A LOT OF URBAN LEGENDS AROUND THIS PART OF TOWN, THOUGH.
LIKE THE SIGHTINGS OF A DOG WITH A HUMAN FACE.
THERE ARE ALSO STORIES ABOUT A HIDDEN AREA FULL OF ESCAPEES FROM FAILED HUMAN EXPERI-MENTS.
That's too scary!
JUST RIDICU-LOUS URBAN LEGENDS.
HEY, SAVE SOME STORIES UNTIL WE GET INSIDE!


I've never been in the Club Camp wing before.
It used to be a separate building unrelated to the school, right?
Wow, a Japanese-style interior.
CREAK
CREAK
1

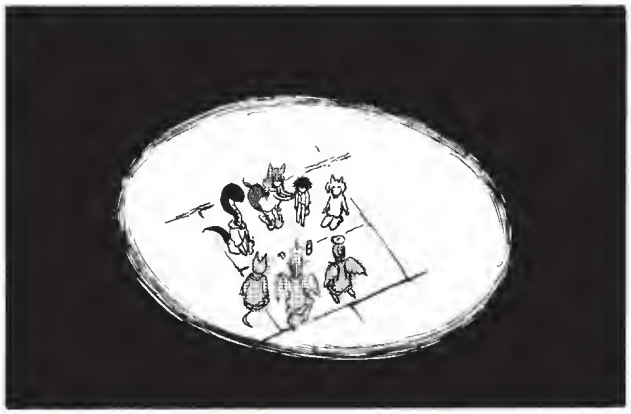
I'M ALREADY GETTING KINDA SCARED.

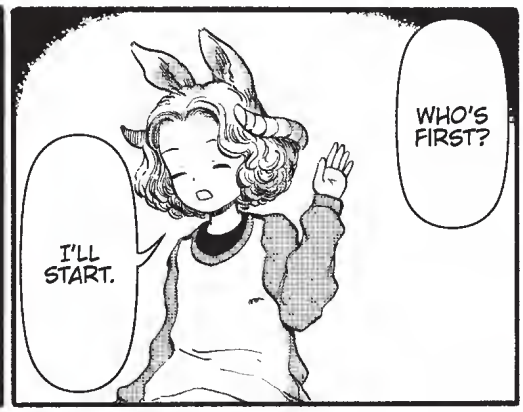

YEP! I FIGURED WE SHOULD GO FOR THE FULL EXPERIENCE.
Budget Candles
CANDLES?


JUST BE CAREFUL. WE'LL BE IN BIG TROUBLE IF WE BURN THE PLACE DOWN.


THEY'RE JUST FOR SHOW. FOR ATMOSPHERE.
Nor am I staying for that many.
THOSE WON'T LAST FOR ONE-HUNDRED WHOLE STORIES.

ALL RIGHT! I THINK WE'RE READY TO BEGIN!

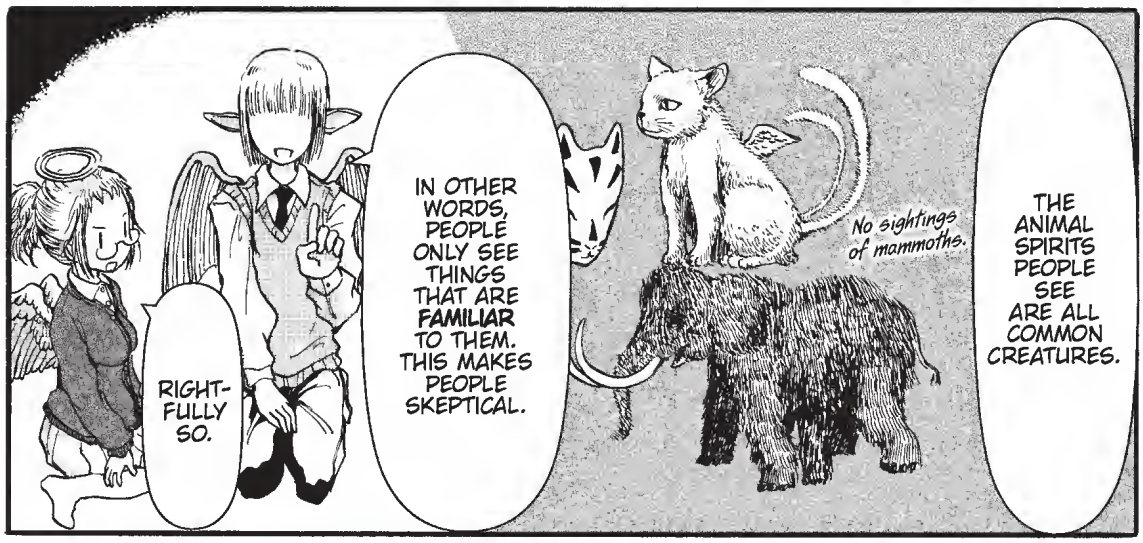


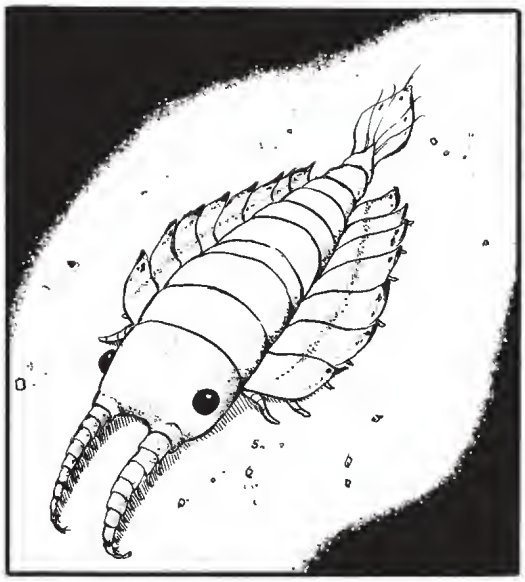

WHO'S FIRST?
I'LL START.

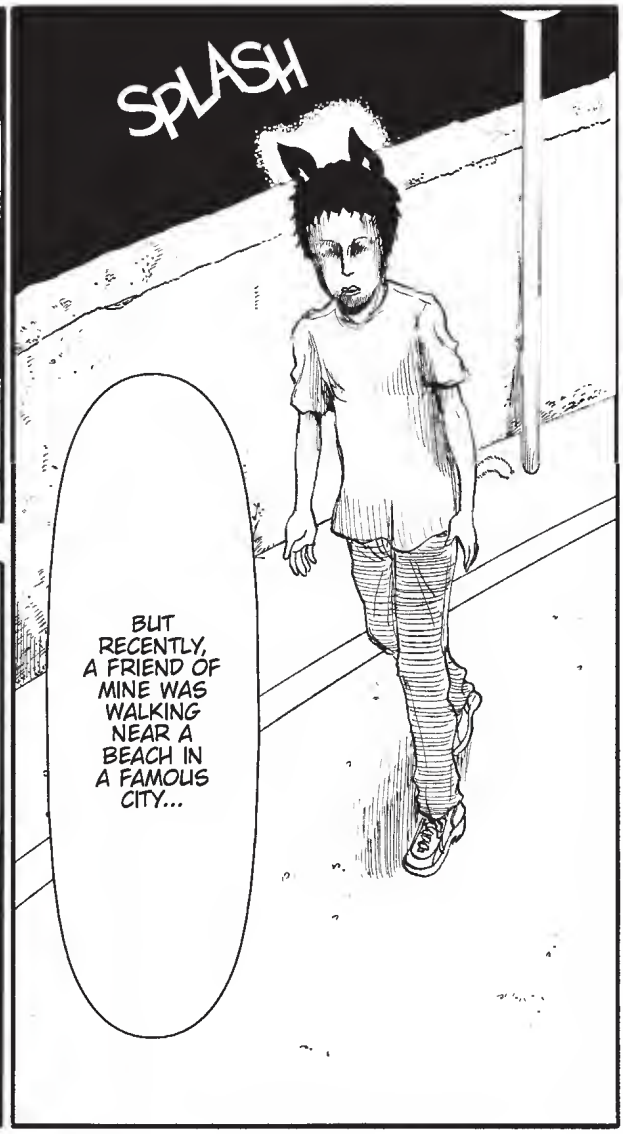
EEEK ...!
SQUEEZE
...AND EVEN NOW, THE TEST SUBJECT CONTINUES TO EAT PEOPLE WHO PASS THROUGH THE SEWERS.
WANNA TRADE PLACES?
NO, I DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF STAMINA.
SHUT UP.
WHAT'S SCARY ABOUT THESE REHASHED URBAN LEGENDS?
I'm jealous of the hugging...

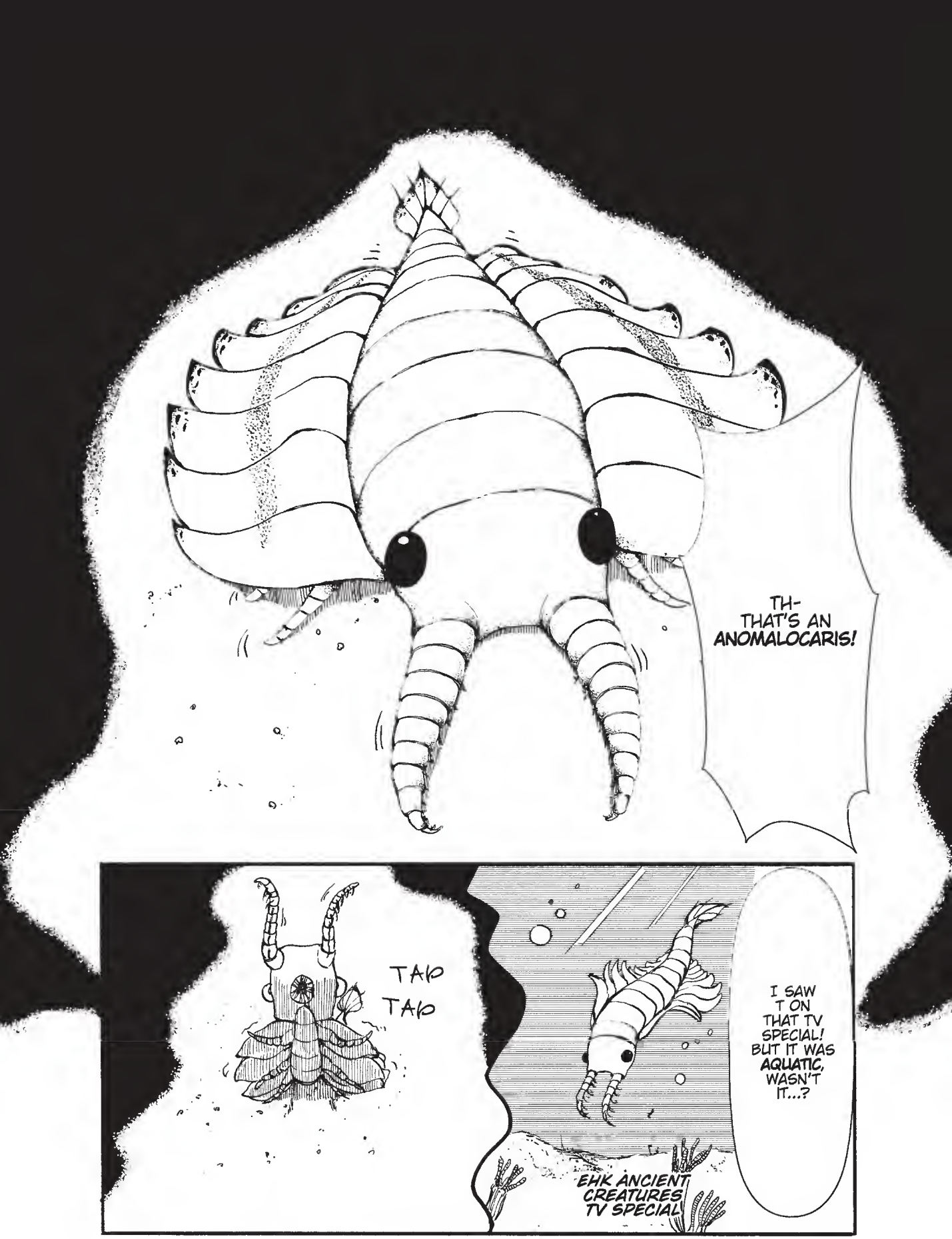
IT'S NORMAL FOR AN ACADEMIC AREA LIKE THIS TO HAVE URBAN LEGENDS OF TEST SUBJECTS INSTEAD OF MONSTERS OR GHOSTS OF FALLEN WARRIORS.
IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY COULD REALLY BE TRUE.
BUT...
HUH?
HOW FAR WHAT CAN GO?
IT'S HARD TO FIND AN END IN RE-SEARCH.
THEY SAY THAT ADVANCED SCIENCE CAN BE CONSIDERED MAGIC.
WHO CAN SAY?
YOU NEVER KNOW HOW FAR IT CAN GO.
ON THE CUTTING EDGE...
I THINK WE'RE GETTING OFF-TOPIC, EVERYONE.
Science and superstition have actually...

OR MAYBE YOU'RE JUST SCARED...?
BUT...
SCIENCE IS MORE INTERESTING THAN THE OCCULT.
WELL... LET'S GET BACK ON TRACK, THEN.
I HAVE ONE THAT IS RELATED TO SCIENCE.
A-AH...!
HMPH!
LOTS OF PEOPLE CLAIM TO HAVE SEEN GHOSTS.
BUT IF THEY SEE THE GHOST OF A SOLDIER, FOR EXAMPLE, IT'S ALWAYS ONE FROM THE WORLD WAR OR SOMETHING ELSE THEY KNOW ABOUT.
THEY DON'T SEE GHOSTS FROM FOREIGN CONFLICTS OR PRE-HISTORY.

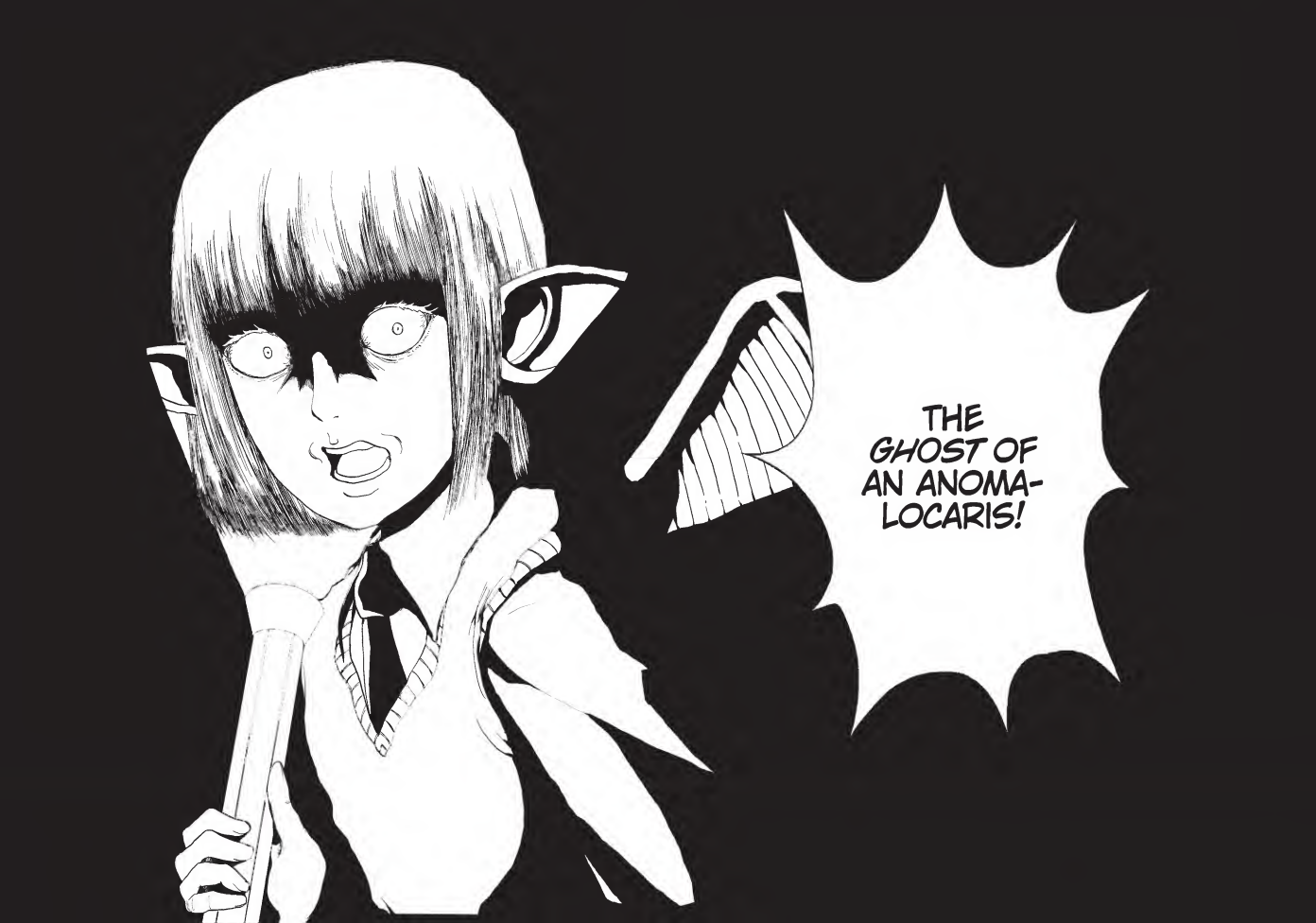

THE ANIMAL SPIRITS PEOPLE SEE ARE ALL COMMON CREATURES.
No sightings of mammoths.
IN OTHER WORDS, PEOPLE ONLY SEE THINGS THAT ARE FAMILIAR TO THEM. THIS MAKES PEOPLE SKEPTICAL.
RIGHT-FULLY SO.




SPLASH
BUT RECENTLY, A FRIEND OF MINE WAS WALKING NEAR A BEACH IN A FAMOUS CITY...


TH-
THAT'S AN
ANOMALOCARIS!
TAP
TAP
I SAW
T ON
THAT TV
SPECIAL!
BUT IT WAS
AQUATIC,
WASN'T
IT...?
EHK ANCIENT
CREATURES
TV SPECIAL

SPLASH
FWIP
OH, THERE'S MORE.
Anomalo-caris?
IS YOUR FRIEND... MENTALLY UNSTABLE?
BUT IT IS BELIEVED THAT SOME WERE ADAPTED TO CRAWL ALONG THE SEA FLOOR. SO, WHAT I SAW COULD HAVE BEEN...
MOST ANOMALOCARIS FOSSILS ARE INCOMPLETE.
I-IMPOS-SIBLE!


THE GHOST OF AN ANOMA-LOCARIS!

I thought so, too!
That was scary!
HIS FACE WAS THE SCARIEST PART!
Eeek!
KYAAA!
SQUEEZE
STAND
WANT TO COME WITH ME?
I'M GOING TO THE REST-ROOM. DOES ANY-ONE...
THIS IS RIDICULOUS.
I'll go with you.
GRIN
GRIN
Me too.
STOP GRINNING!
I-I'M NOT SCARED!

A CentaUr's Life

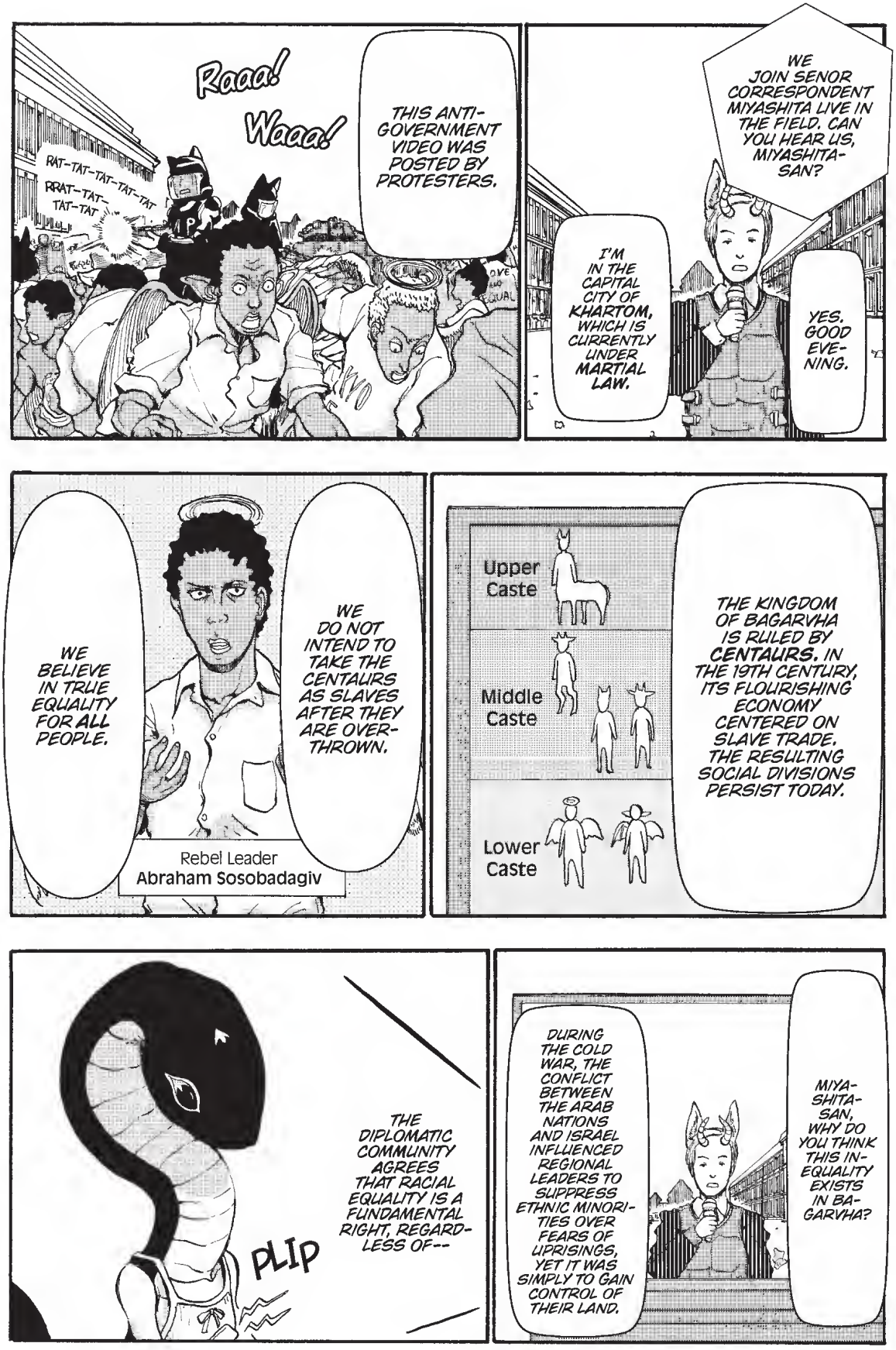
EXPLORING HUMAN ANCESTRY: CRO-MAGNON

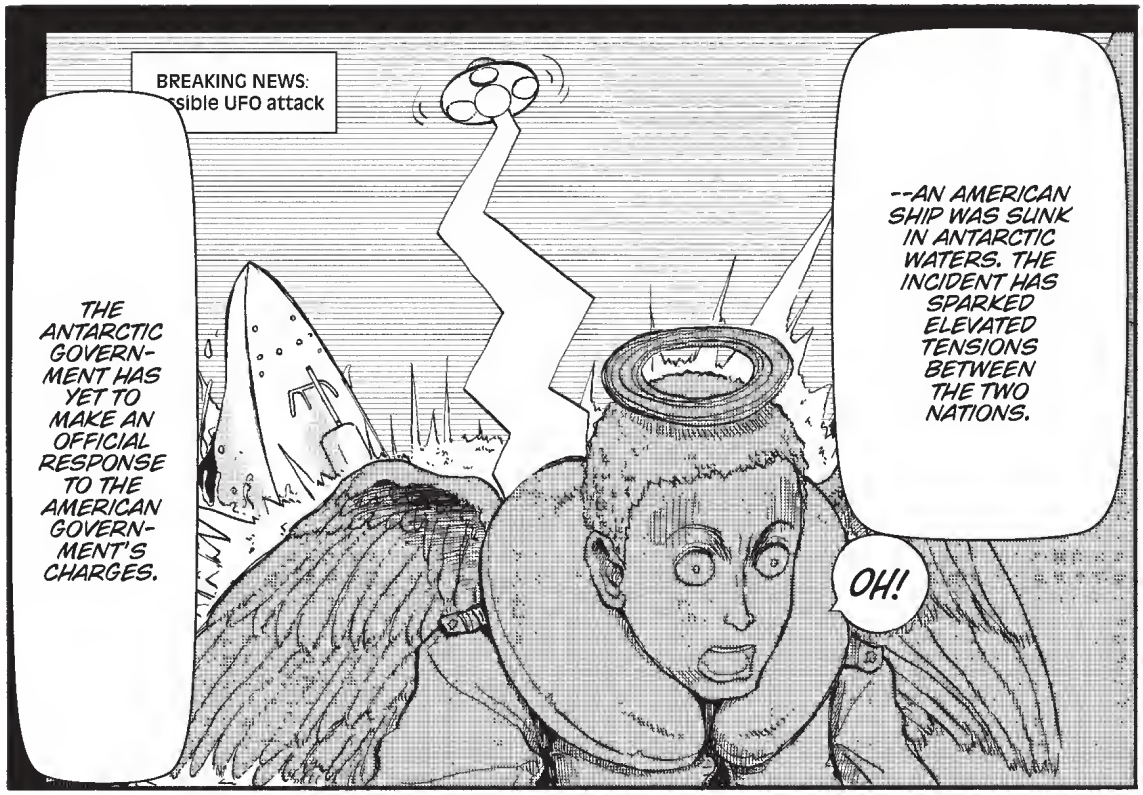
MODERN HUMANS (*HOMO SAPIENS*) APPEARED ROUGHLY 200,000 YEARS AGO AND SUBSEQUENTLY DISPERSED AROUND THE WORLD. A GROUP OF EUROPEAN EARLY MODERN HUMANS CALLED THE CRO-MAGNON EXISTED ROUGHLY 45,000 TO 22,000 YEARS AGO. THE FIRST CRO-MAGNON REMAINS WERE FOUND IN IN A LARGE CAVE IN SOUTHWESTERN FRANCE. TO THE NEANDERTHALS WHO HAD ALREADY BEEN LIVING IN EUROPE FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, THE CRO-MAGNON WERE A NEW PEOPLE. CRO-MAGNON WERE ANATOMICALLY SIMILAR TO MODERN HUMANS, ESPECIALLY EUROPEANS. THEY MADE STONE TOOLS, DID CAVE PAINTINGS, AND CREATED BONE SCULPTURES. KNOWN CRO-MAGNON BODY MORPHOLOGIES INCLUDE ANGELFOLK, DRACONIDS, CATFOLK, GOATFOLK, AND CENTAURS. NO MERFOLK OR WERETIGER REMAINS HAVE BEEN FOUND, MOST LIKELY DUE TO THEIR SMALL POPULATIONS.

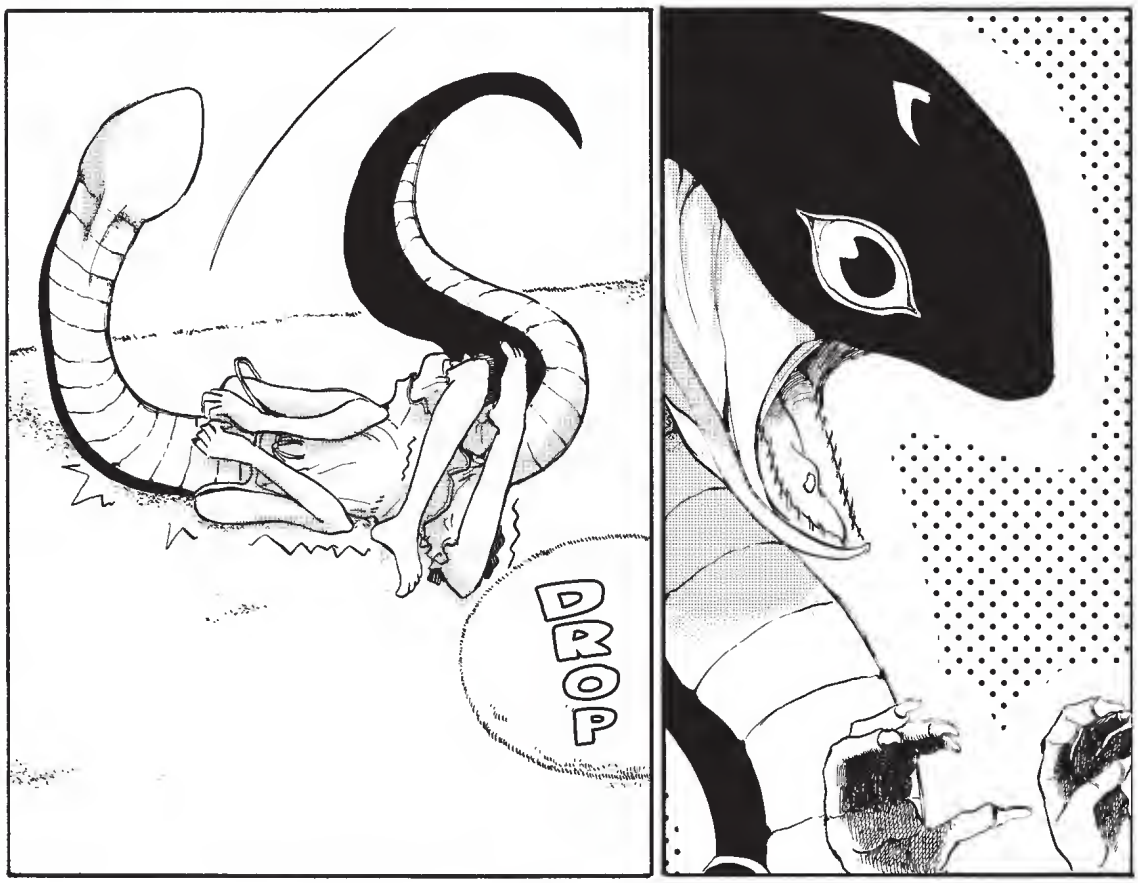
THERE ARE CURRENTLY MORE THAN 7 BILLION *HOMO SAPIENS* IN EXISTENCE, AND THAT NUMBER CONTINUES TO GROW. HUMANS NOW LIVE IN PLACES ONCE BELIEVED TO BE UNINHABITABLE, FROM LAND TO SEA TO SKY. REGARDLESS OF THE SUCCESS OF THE SPECIES, HOWEVER, EVENTUAL EXTINCTION IS INEVITABLE.

CHAPTER 20

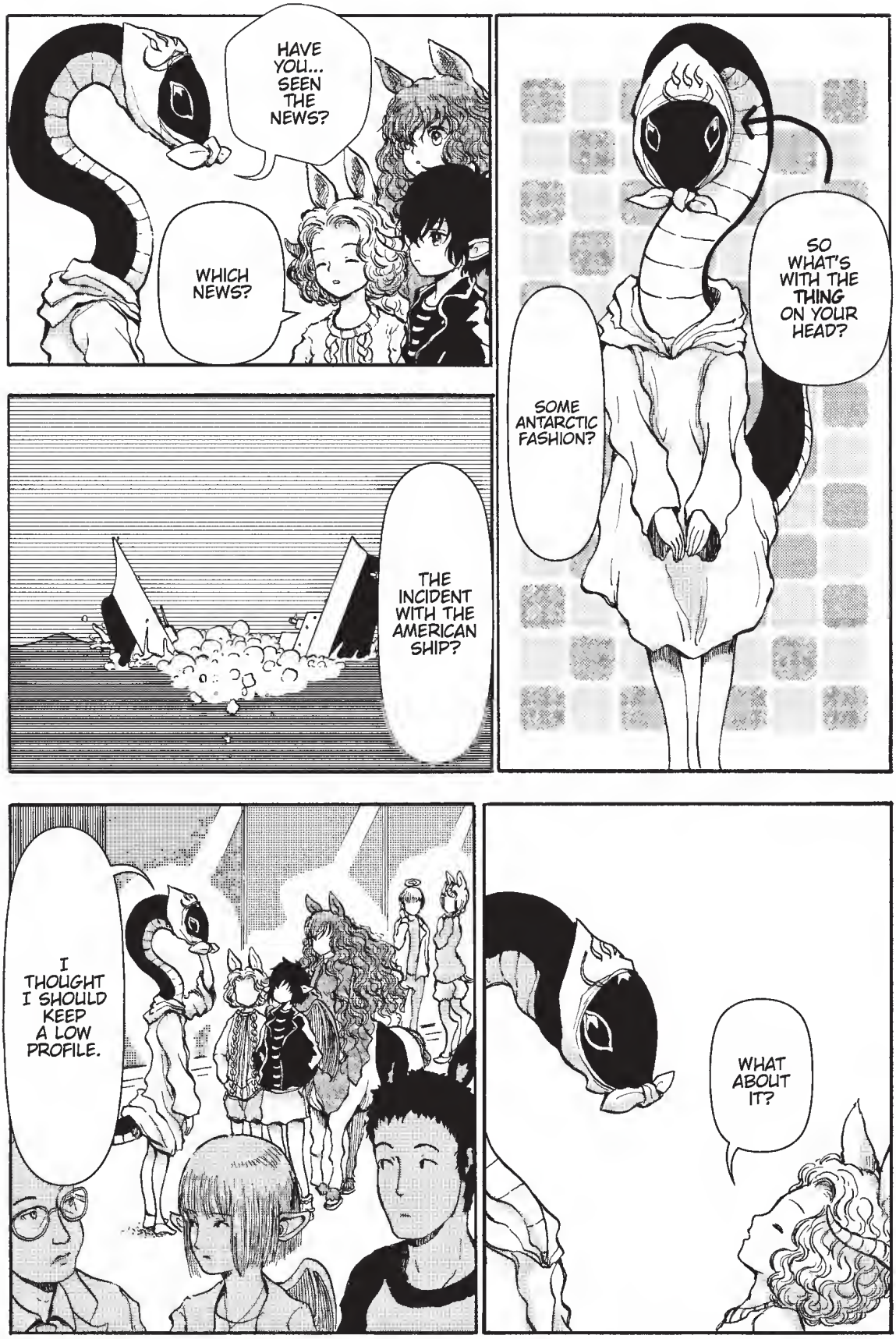
Raaa!
Raaa!
END
DUM
DA
DUUUM
EHK
Morning News
Shots fired during demonstration in Bagarvha
IN OUR TOP STORY, BAGARVIAN PUBLIC SAFETY FORCES OPENED FIRE ON PROTESTERS EARLIER THIS AFTERNOON.
PLIP


Raaa!
Waaa!
RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT
RRAT-TAT-
TAT-TAT
THIS ANTI-GOVERNMENT VIDEO WAS POSTED BY PROTESTERS.
WE JOIN SENOR CORRESPONDENT MIYASHITA LIVE IN THE FIELD. CAN YOU HEAR US, MIYASHITA-SAN?
I'M IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF KHARTOM, WHICH IS CURRENTLY UNDER MARTIAL LAW.
YES. GOOD EVE-NING.
WE BELIEVE IN TRUE EQUALITY FOR ALL PEOPLE.
WE DO NOT INTEND TO TAKE THE CENTAURS AS SLAVES AFTER THEY ARE OVER-THROWN.
Rebel Leader
Abraham Sosobadagiv
Upper Caste
Middle Caste
Lower Caste
THE KINGDOM OF BAGARVHA IS RULED BY CENTAURS. IN THE 19TH CENTURY, ITS FLOURISHING ECONOMY CENTERED ON SLAVE TRADE. THE RESULTING SOCIAL DIVISIONS PERSIST TODAY.
PLIP
THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY AGREES THAT RACIAL EQUALITY IS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT, REGARD-LESS OF--
DURING THE COLD WAR, THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE ARAB NATIONS AND ISRAEL INFLUENCED REGIONAL LEADERS TO SUPPRESS ETHNIC MINORI-TIES OVER FEARS OF UPRISINGS, YET IT WAS SIMPLY TO GAIN CONTROL OF THEIR LAND.
MIYA-SHITA-SAN, WHY DO YOU THINK THIS IN-EQUALITY EXISTS IN BA-GARVHA?


BREAKING NEWS:
sible UFO attack
THE ANTARCTIC GOVERN-MENT HAS YET TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO THE AMERICAN GOVERN-MENT'S CHARGES.
--AN AMERICAN SHIP WAS SUNK IN ANTARCTIC WATERS. THE INCIDENT HAS SPARKED ELEVATED TENSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS.
OH!


DROP

Hm?
SUU-CHAN, GOOD MORNING.
OH, GOOD MORNING.
WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?


HAVE YOU... SEEN THE NEWS?
WHICH NEWS?
SO WHAT'S WITH THE THING ON YOUR HEAD?
SOME ANTARCTIC FASHION?
THE INCIDENT WITH THE AMERICAN SHIP?
I THOUGHT I SHOULD KEEP A LOW PROFILE.
WHAT ABOUT IT?

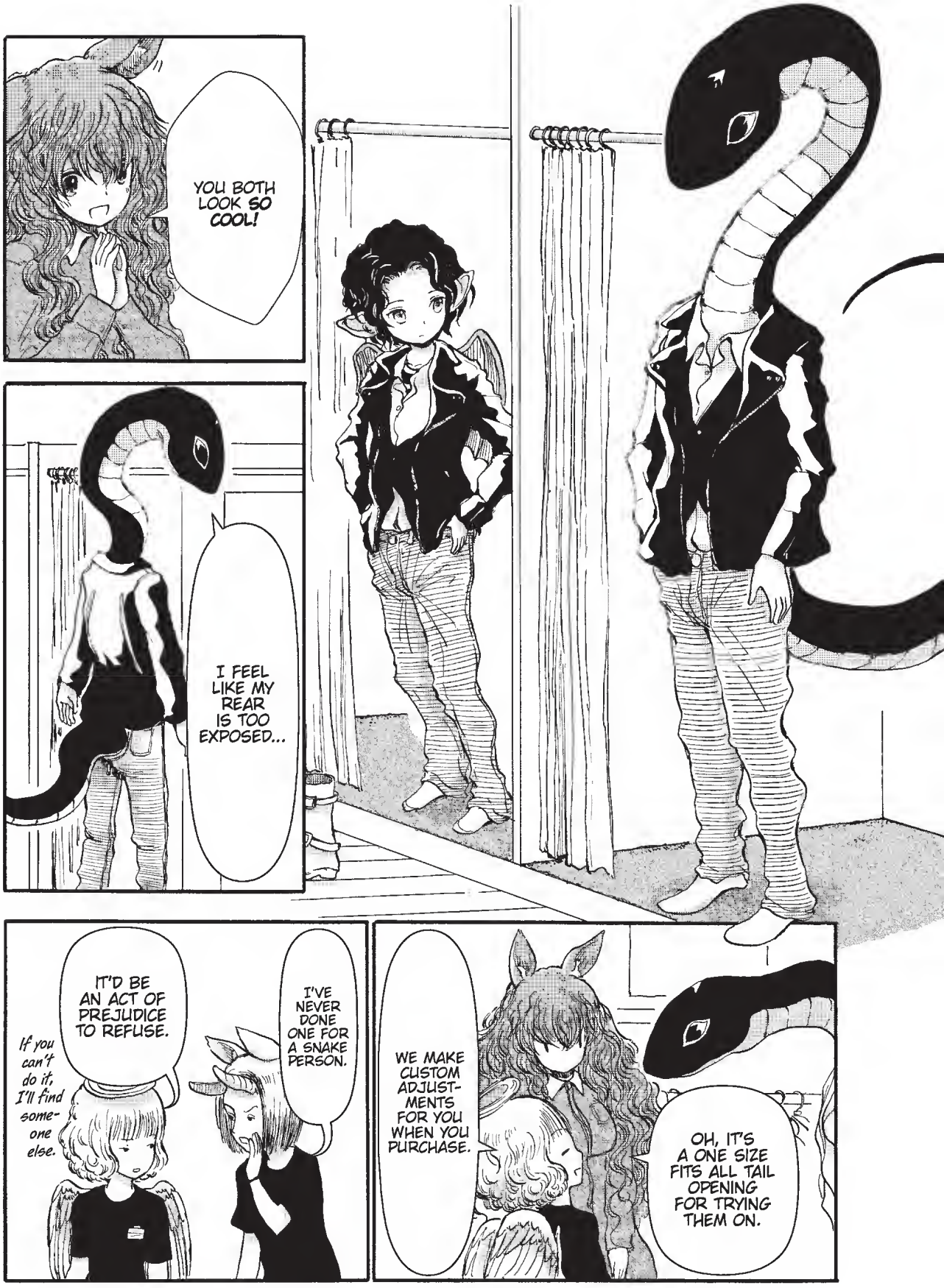
COME CLOSER.
KEEP A LOW PROFILE, HUH?
HOW IS THIS "KEEPING A LOW PROFILE"?!
FWZP
IT'S FINE. THE AMOUNT OF FORCE USED WAS ACCEPT-ABLE.
THAT'S NOT WHAT WORRIED ME.
I'm more interested in whether that was a comedic straight man response!
DON'T DO THAT! IDIOT!
SHWIP
FWIP

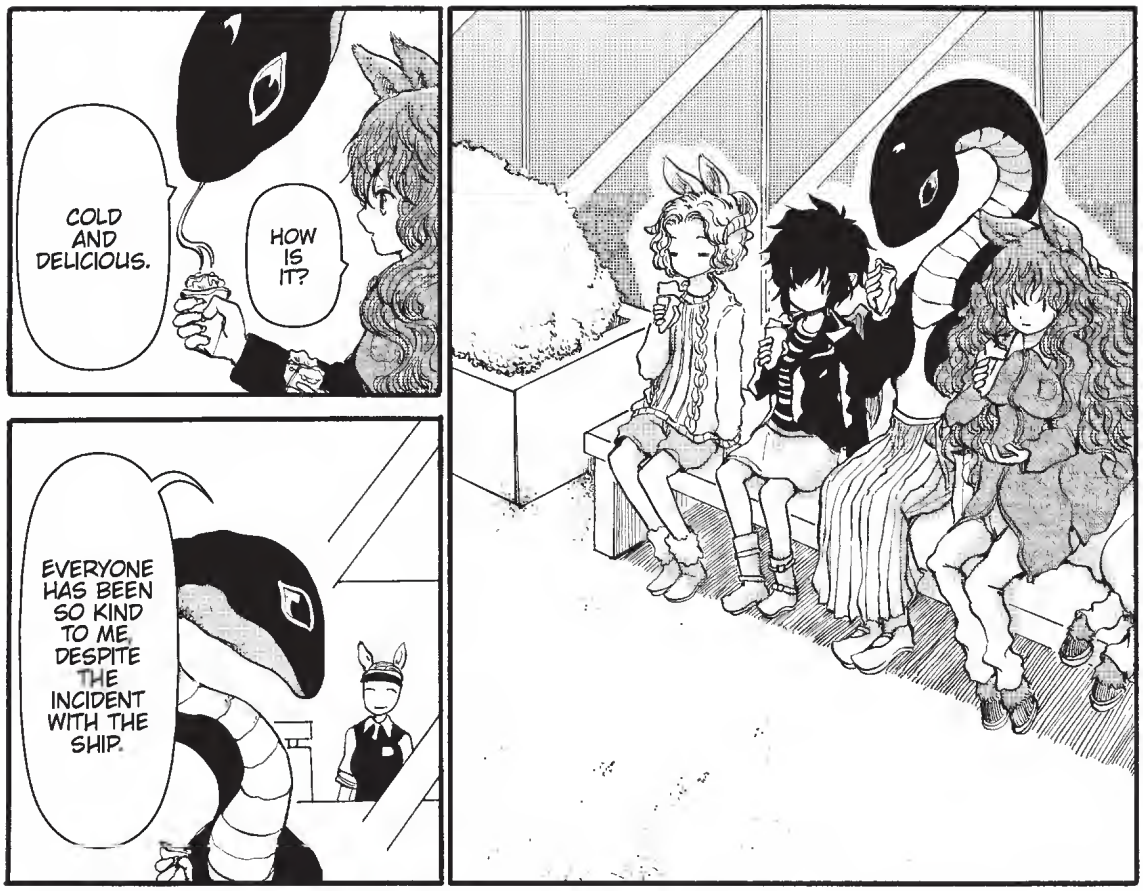
YOU SHOULD BE FINE HERE.
BESIDES, THAT'S HAPPEN-ING WITH AMERICA.
YOU DON'T NEED TO WEAR THAT.
IT'S THE LEAST I CAN--
NOBODY WILL HURT YOU.
REALLY? EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE FELLOW HUMANS?
I'M SURE SOME PEOPLE ARE EVEN HAPPY ABOUT IT.
YEAH, WELL...
SUU-CHAN, YOU ALWAYS WEAR THE SAME CLOTHES.
ON A DIFFERENT NOTE...

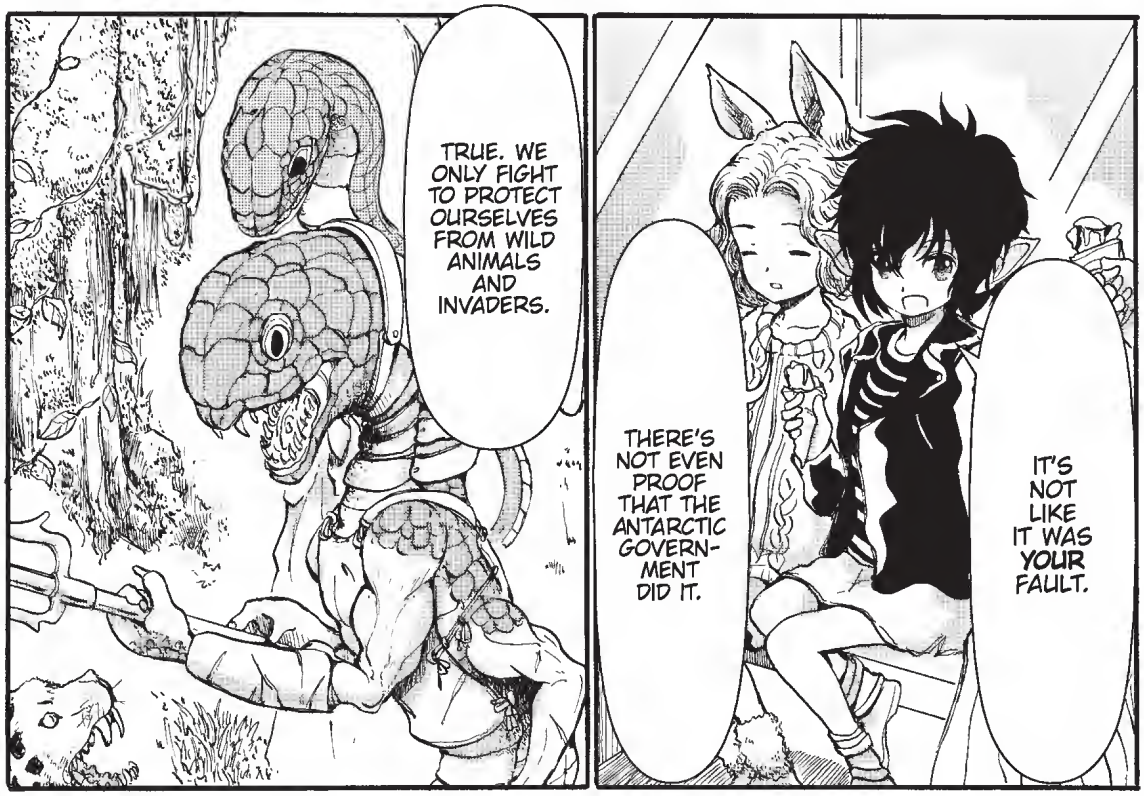
EVEN ON TV, YOU GUYS ALWAYS DRESS THE SAME.
I CHANGE EVERY DAY! DO I SMELL?
TH- THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT!
I HAD MINE HEMMED SHORTER ON THE SUGGEST- ION OF MY LANGUAGE TUTOR, WHO IS ALSO THE DAUGHTER OF THE AMBAS- SADOR.
IT'S A FAVORITE OF OUR PEOPLE. HUMAN MONKS USED TO DRESS THIS WAY.
AND IT HELPS HIDE THE SHAPE OF OUR BODIES AROUND HUMANS.

Use your thighs!
No, like this!
MY TUTOR COACHED ME IN EVERY-THING, INCLUDING "COMMON SENSE" AND SOCIAL INTER-ACTION.
OF COURSE. ALL LIVING CREATURES GAIN INFOR-MATION IN ROUGHLY THE SAME WAY.
YOU HAVE A TUTOR? SO YOU LEARN BY STUDY-ING?
Not by sleep learning or something?
IT LOOKS FEMININE.
ARE YOU REQUIRED TO WEAR THOSE?
NO. OF COURSE NOT.
THEN WHY DON'T WE GO SHOPPING?
NO, I'M TRULY GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE HELP I'VE RECEIVED.
YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT, HUH?

GIRLY CLOTHES ACTUALLY SUIT HER.
YOU SHOULD TRY IT ON, TOO, NOZOMI-CHAN.
ME?!
YOU'D LOOK FINE IF YOU'D COMB YOUR HAIR.
UGH.
PFFT! YOU LOOK LIKE A CROSS-DRESSER.


YOU BOTH LOOK SO COOL!
I FEEL LIKE MY REAR IS TOO EXPOSED...
OH, IT'S A ONE SIZE FITS ALL TAIL OPENING FOR TRYING THEM ON.
WE MAKE CUSTOM ADJUST-MENTS FOR YOU WHEN YOU PURCHASE.
I'VE NEVER DONE ONE FOR A SNAKE PERSON.
IT'D BE AN ACT OF PREJUDICE TO REFUSE.
If you can't do it, I'll find some-one else.

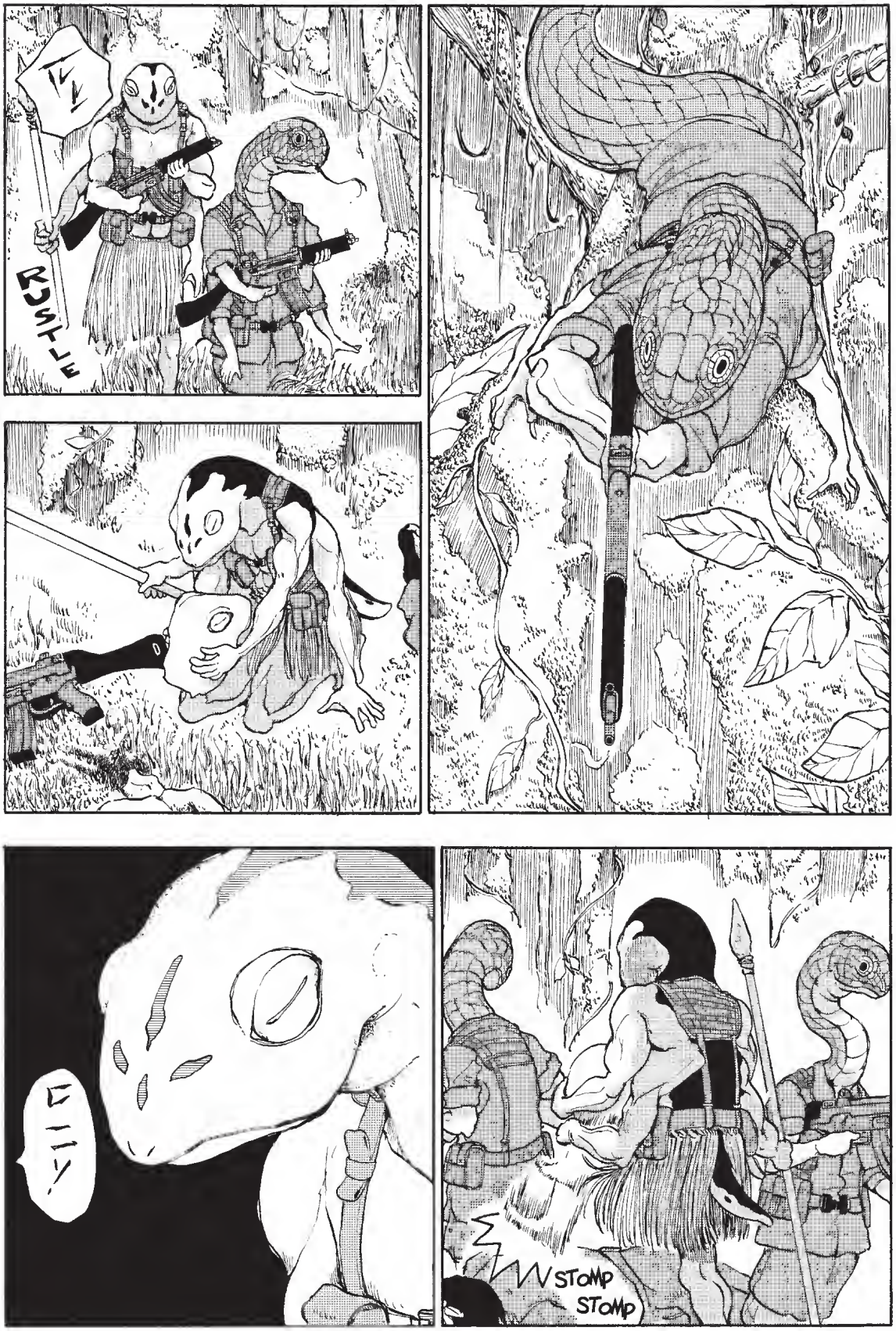

HOW IS IT?
COLD AND DELICIOUS.
EVERYONE HAS BEEN SO KIND TO ME, DESPITE THE INCIDENT WITH THE SHIP.


IT'S NOT LIKE IT WAS YOUR FAULT.
THERE'S NOT EVEN PROOF THAT THE ANTARCTIC GOVERNMENT DID IT.
TRUE. WE ONLY FIGHT TO PROTECT OURSELVES FROM WILD ANIMALS AND INVADERS.

YOUR TURN TO PICK, RIGHT?
OKAY, LET'S HEAD TO THE THEATER!
ALL COUNTRIES HAVE SECRETS.
ER, I'M SORRY... THE REST IS SECRET.
SCREECH
SCREECH
HERE... YOU SHOULD EAT, TOO.
AT MOST, THERE ARE A FEW SAVAGES WITH SPEARS WANDERING AROUND.
IT'S THE PROTECTIVE ZONE OF THE LIZARDS.
DON'T WORRY, THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS WON'T COME THIS FAR.

NO THANKS.
HA! SORRY, M'LORD.
EITHER WAY, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU CAN EAT THAT.
WHAT? IT'S JUST A LIZARD.
NO, IT'S A FROG.

THUNK
THWIP
IS IT THE GOVERN-MENT ARMY?
OR ANOTHER GUERRILLA GROUP? THE AMERI-CANS?
RUSTLE
THWIP
ABOVE ...!

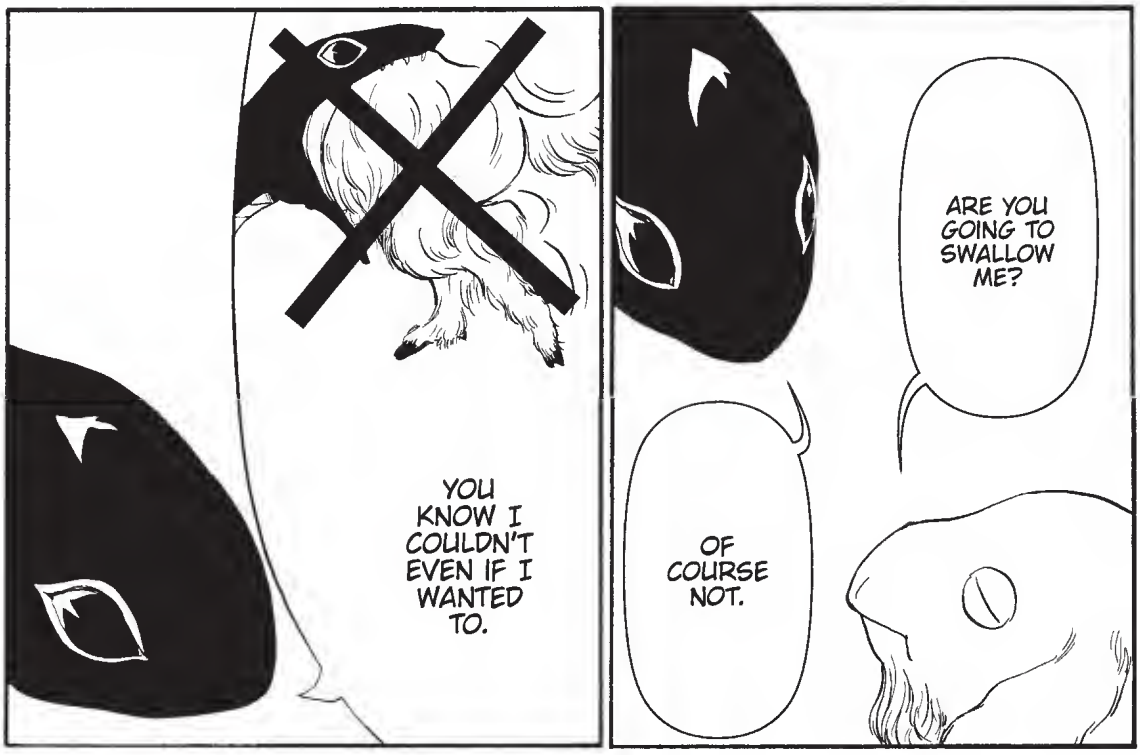

ヤレン
RUSTLE
STOMP
STOMP
ニニッ

SCREECH
SCREECH

WHAT? IT'S AN ACTION MOVIE. NO THINKING NEEDED.
IT WAS QUITE THOUGHT-PROVOKING.
EHE...
I THOUGHT IT WAS PRETTY GOOD.
I HOPE TO SOMEDAY UNDERSTAND HUMANS ENOUGH TO THINK THAT WAY.
WHY? BECAUSE IT'S YOUR JOB?
NORMAL ANTARCTIC PEOPLE WOULD THINK IT IS BECAUSE OF MY MISSION.
BUT I'M NOT NORMAL, AND THAT'S PROBABLY WHY I'M HERE.
I BELIEVE THAT TO LEARN ABOUT OTHERS IS TO LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF, BUT VERY FEW AMONG MY PEOPLE HAVE INTEREST IN DOING SO.
OH, COOL! JUST LIKE A MOVIE!

A CentaUr's Life

AFTERWORD...


ARE YOU GOING TO SWALLOW ME?
OF COURSE NOT.
YOU KNOW I COULDN'T EVEN IF I WANTED TO.

IT DOESN'T TASTE GOOD AT ALL.
JUST KIDDING... ACTUALLY, WE EAT PASTES MADE OF MOSS AND FUNGAL FEEDERS.
WHAT DO ANTARCTIC PEOPLE EAT?
WE EAT PENGUINS AS THEY PASS BY.
(Just eat it!)
MUNCH
MIX MIX
AS A CHILD, I ENJOYED CHANGING THE TEXTURE BY HOW I POURED IT OR MIXED IT.
SIMILAR CONCEPT, BUT MUCH MORE TASTELESS AND DRY.
SO IT'S KINDA LIKE SPACE FOOD?
THAT'S RIGHT!
HIME-CHAN, JUST HOW MUCH MORE ARE YOU PLANNING TO DEVELOP?
JIGGLE
IT'S IMPORTANT FOR BRAIN DEVELOPMENT. SO THE TASTELESS FOOD WASN'T A TOTAL WASTE.
I BELIEVE THAT I WAS "PLAY-ING."

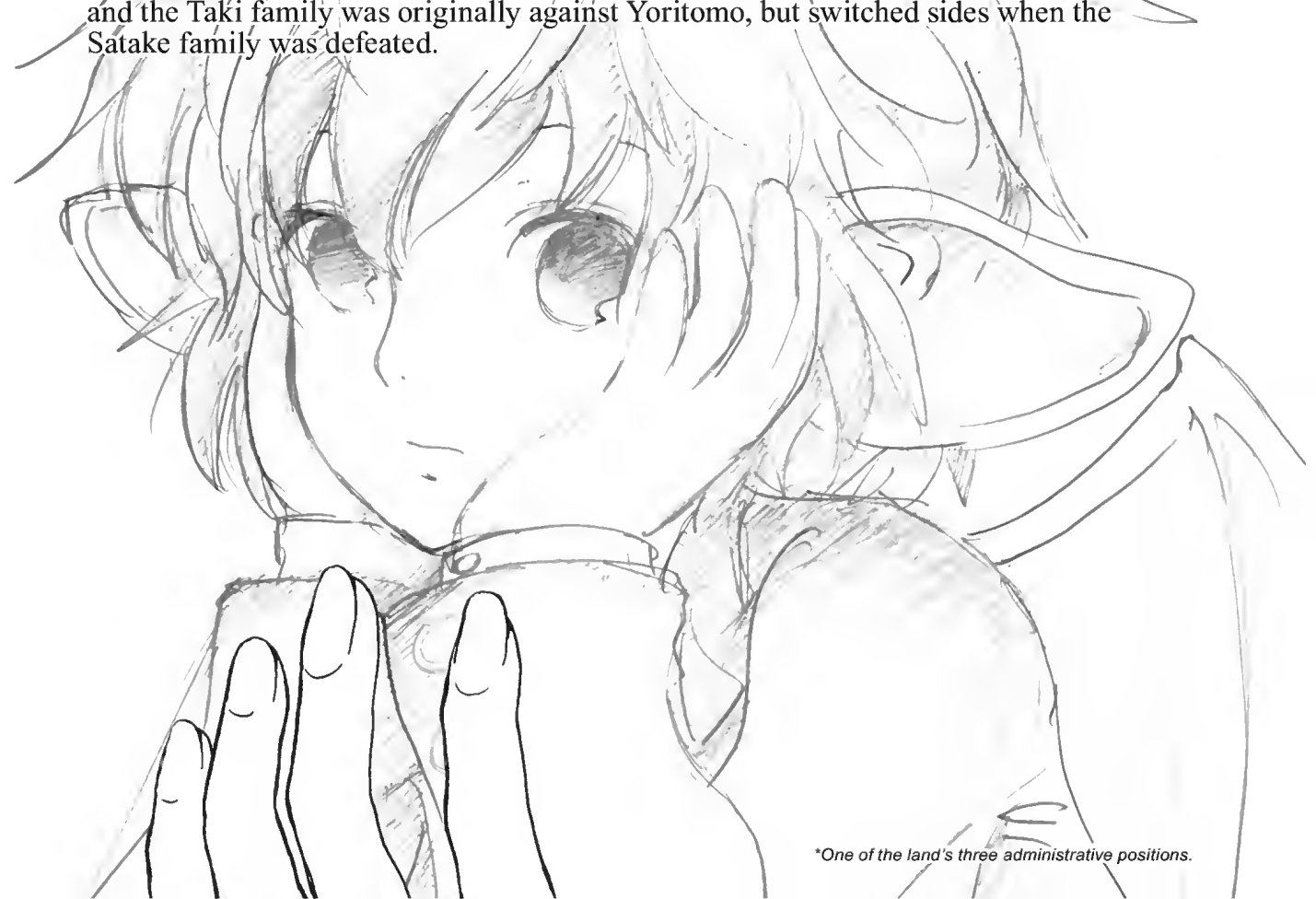
KATA-SHI DEVELOPS IN HIDACHI

Without waiting for the army of the imperial court, Kata no Sadamori [方貞盛] settled Kata no Masakado's rebellion and gave the territory to his nephew, Ikan. His Mimori management office (a military facility housing personnel, weapons, food, and other materials) was located in what is now the Tamiyama district of Kanata City. Today, it is an elementary school playground.

The mild climate and abundant flat land in southern Hidachi prefecture—including Kanata City—were highly prized, leading to endless armed conflicts over territorial disputes. Kata no Ikan, already in control of the Mimori management office, also took control over the Taki management office (in what is now Kanata City's Takiyama district) via one of these armed clashes. He made Taki his base of operations as he continued to grow more powerful in southern Hidachi, becoming a ranking official (*jou**) in Hidachi's government. His descendants took the name of their base, Taki, as their family name and continued to pass down their growing power until they were called chancellors (*daijou*). The Kata family line in Hidachi enjoyed this power until the middle of the era.

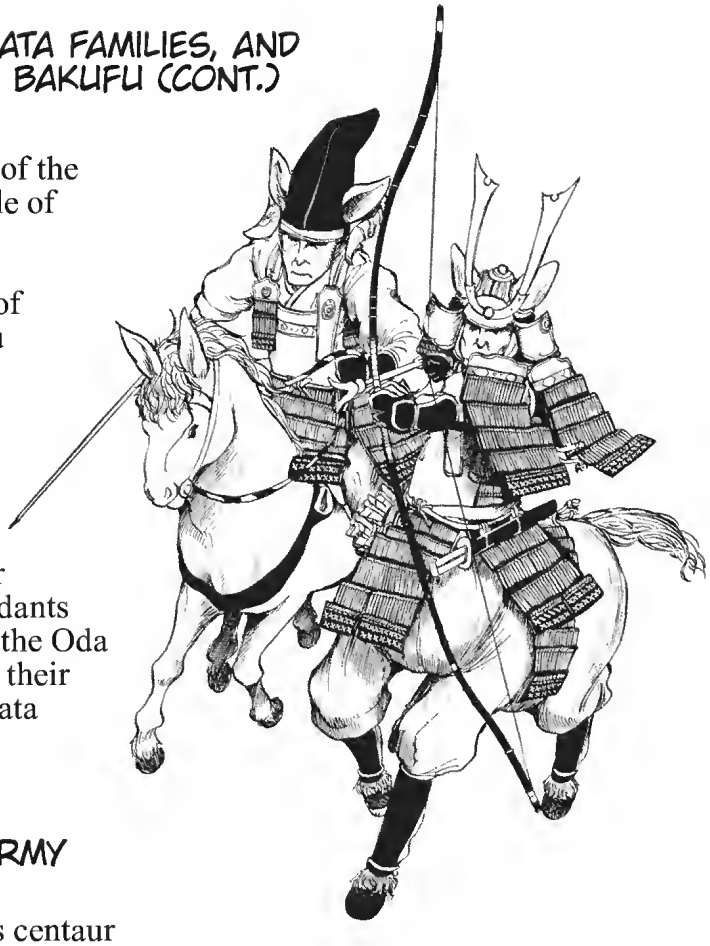
CONFLICT BETWEEN THE EN AND KATA FAMILIES, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHINKURA BAKUFU

In the 4th year of Jishou (1180), En no Yoritomo built an army for the purpose of attacking Kata no Kiyomori. The Kantou warrior army, which included some members of the Kata family, applied en masse to join Yoritomo's army. Family allegiances were cast aside during the conflict between the En and Kata families—for instance, En no Yoritomo's wife and her family supported his side even though they were of Kata blood; the aristocratic Satake family fought against Yoritomo despite their own En ancestry; and the Taki family was originally against Yoritomo, but switched sides when the Satake family was defeated.



*One of the land's three administrative positions.

CONFLICT BETWEEN THE EN AND KATA FAMILIES, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHINKURA BAKUFU (CONT.)



The Kata family, who were distant relatives of the imperial family, all perished during the battle of Dan no Ura. En no Yoritomo established the Shinkura Bakufu and made his most loyal subordinate, Yada no Tomoie, the guardian of Hidachi. During the fourth year of Kenkyuu (1193), Taki no Yoshimiki's lands were confiscated after he fortified the Taki castle and threatened rebellion. During the same year, his younger brother, Shimozuma Hiromiki, was executed for suspicion that he cursed the Houjou family. As a result, the southern area of Mount Akaba fell under the control of the Yada family. Their descendants changed their family name to Oda and used the Oda castle (now in Kanata City's Oda district) as their base. They remain an important part of Kanata City history.

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE WARRIOR ARMY

The skills and traditions of warriors (such as centaur archery)** were not passed down under Kata no Masakado. Because of this, most historians do not consider him to be a true warrior. The lack of trained warriors became a significant problem due to unrest among the prisoners of war. The prisoners were mostly northern indigenous people who rose up with the rebellion and decline of imperial power. Small bands of skilled centaur archers were established in order to quell the unrest. These specialized archers were used to not only to control unrest, but also to handle instances of fighting between warriors.

***Traditionally referred to as yabusame, as was mounted archery by non-centaurs. It is considered exceptionally difficult to hit a moving object while also in motion, and the technique requires significant training and skill. Today, this skill is only exhibited at traditional yabusame events.*

When En no Yoritomo began building his army prior to the conflict between the En and Kata families, these small bands—typically numbering from a few dozen to a few hundred—quickly grew to number in the tens of thousands. Their ranks expanded to include not only centaurs, but people on horseback. These individuals were aristocrats with the resources to care for a horse, but not necessarily the training of a warrior. Since they lacked skill in horseback archery, they instead developed horseback swordsmanship. This martial innovation forged new warrior families that En no Yoritomo had no choice but to acknowledge as legitimate. As a result, history shows a different picture of warriors than we originally imagined. By the Shinkura era, there were already many types of warriors in existence.

A CentaUr's Life

Hime and her classmates receive the shock of their lives when they meet the new slithery transfer student! Hime is forced to face an old phobia, while the new snake girl tries her best to fit in. Later, a visit with Hime's grandparents reveals some interesting family history.

Welcome to *A Centaur's Life!*

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